UNIVERSITÉ DE RENNES,

FACULTÉ DES LETTRES.

THÈSE DE DOCTORAT

BLISS CARMAN

A STUDY IN CANADIAN POETRY.

By H. D. C. LEE,

ENGLISH LECTOR AT THE FACULTY OF LETTERS
(RENNES).

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BUXTON

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TO

MY CANADIAN NIECE AND NEPHEWS.

PREFACE.

SOME thirteen years ago M. Sarolea, of the University of Edinburgh, reviewing in the Revue d'Edimbourg the Nineteenth Century English Literature of his eminent colleague, Professor Saintsbury, deplored the tendency of English criticism to confine itself to the study of home products, and suggested the advisability of giving its closer attention to the literary output of Greater England and America. From this article was born the interest in Colonial literature that led us, first, into the little known territory of French Canadian letters and, afterwards, on the suggestion of Professor Le Braz, of Rennes University, into the more fragrant realms of English Canadian poetry. The present study is, we believe, the first of its kind in English, and as such necessarily tentative and incomplete. It will serve its purpose if it help in a modest way to stimulate the somewhat apathetic interest taken by English people in Colonial letters and to make more widely known in Europe than he is at present one of the most original and inspiring poets of the present century.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks to the many who, directly and indirectly, have assisted us in the preparation of this book: to Professor Feuillerat and to Professor Le Braz, of the Faculty of Letters, Rennes; to M. D'Hangest, agrégé d'anglais, of the Lycée du Hâvre; to

R. Maxwell, Esq.; to Mrs. Lee; and to the Librarians of the King's Street Reference Library, Manchester.

To Mr. Carman our indebtedness is so heavy as to render adequate acknowledgment of it, either here or elsewhere, an impossibility.

H. D. C. L.

RENNES, *13th April, 1912.*

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BLISS CARMAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITERARY HISTORY OF CANADA.

THE eldest daughter of the British Empire, and by no means the least attractive, Canada seems destined to take high rank amongst the nations of to-morrow. The colony which Voltaire once stigmatized with the flippancy of ignorance as "a few acres of snow,"[1] is now universally known to be a vast country with enormous natural resources, a land,—if not exactly of milk and honey,—where, at any rate, the burden of existence is considerably lighter than in Europe. What is much less widely known, however, is that the Dominion is daily tending to become more and more conscious of national ideals and inspirations, and that these ideals and aspirations have already found expression in literature, and in the highest form of literature, poetry. Of recent years, the output of this Canadian poetry,—the first *native* verse of literary significance produced by a British Colony,—[2] has been very considerable; so considerable, in fact, that an examination of its characteristics and tendencies in the work of a representative poet has become eminently desirable.

The task, however, of finding a representative Canadian poet is beset with some little difficulty, for there are in Canada

[1] One must read such a piece as Fréchette's "Sous la Statue de Voltaire," if one would gain an idea of how this famous phrase still rankles in the Canadian, and more especially the French Canadian, heart.

[2] Australian verse is mainly the work of British-born poets.

two peoples, the one Anglo-Saxon and the other of Gallic origin, and the question is immediately raised: Amongst which of these two peoples is such a poet to be found? Such a question can hardly be answered satisfactorily without a review of the chief Canadian poets, French and English, and a retrospective glance at the circumstances which have determined the artistic production of their respective communities.

During the entire period of the French administration,—a time more favourable for the making of history than for chronicling it,—Canada had, strictly speaking, little or no literature of her own. The vast majority of the colonists were wholly illiterate, and had slight opportunity of obtaining even a modicum of intellectual nourishment. Unlike their New England neighbours, they took no share whatever in the government of their country, being little better than mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water," dependant in the most trifling matters upon the direction of their unscrupulous taskmasters.[1] "What distinguished Canada from France," remarks the great Canadian historian, Francis Parkman, "was a total absence of revolt against the laws of its being,—an absolute conservatism, an unquestioning acceptance of Church and King. The Canadian, ignorant of everything but what the priest thought fit to teach him, had never heard of Voltaire; and if he had known him would have thought him a devil. He had, it is true, a spirit of insubordination born of the freedom of the forest; but if his instincts rebelled, his mind and soul were passively submissive. The unchecked control of a hierarchy robbed him of the independence of intellect and character, without which, under the conditions of modern life, a people must resign itself to a position of inferiority."

Nor did the conquest of the colony by the English tend at first to infuse intellectual vigour into the French inhabitants. Abandoned by their king and country, they rallied round the priests of their religion, investing them with an authority

[1] "Canada," Sir John Bourinot.

at once supreme and incontestable. These latter, in their endeavours to preserve the religion and nationality of their compatriots, found it expedient to foster among them a spirit of dependance upon ecclesiastical direction.[1] Not only did the Church vigorously resent all interference with her control of the schools, but she made every effort to supervize the reading of her flock, banning without hesitation everything which savoured of heresy or independent opinion.[2] With the spread of education, rebellions against this clerical dominion became, of course, more and more frequent; but, as the case of Arthur Buies sufficiently proves,[3] abject submission to the authority of the Church was long considered in French Canada a *sine qua non* of respectability. Such a state of public opinion, when after nearly a century of isolation communication with France was resumed, rendered free intercourse between the two countries well nigh impossible,—a misfortune which had disastrous effects upon the early literature of French Canada.

---

1 Cf. Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe," Vol. II., page 427 *et seq.*

"Civil liberty was given them (the French Canadians) by the British sword but the conqueror left their religious system untouched, and through it they have imposed upon themselves a weight of ecclesiastical tulelage that finds few equals in the most Catholic countries of Europe.

Whether or not, there would have been any French Canada to-day without such tulelage, is a very moot point.

2 The works of Musset, Renan, and especially Zola, for example. See Siegfried's "Race Question in Canada."

Because of its protest against the intervention of certain of the Roman Catholic clergy in politics, "Le Clergé Canadien," by L. O. David, Sénateur, was condemned by the Congregation of the Index at Rome. See Prof. Geddes' "Canadian French" (a bibliography).

3 The editor and publisher of an anti-clerical paper, "La Lanterne," Buies was treated as a pariah by the French inhabitants of Montreal on account of his anticlericalism, Circa 1880. The following extract from "La Lanterne" of 1884, cited by M. Ab der Halden in his "Nouvelles Etudes sur la Littérature Canadienne," is interesting as showing the extent of the clerical domination:—"He (Buies) confessed to having gone too far on certain occasions, but what was that in comparison with the odious persecution of the true liberals of that period. They had seen their Institute condemned, excommunicated, and obliged to close its doors, and the only library in Montreal that was anything like public placed under the ban of popular opinion."

The circumstances which gave birth to this literature were in the main political. Defeated in the civil war of 1837, French Canadians felt their nationality and language once more in danger, the contemptuous words of the English High Commissioner, "the Canadian French are not a people, they have no literature,"[1] seeming to them to forebode the absorption of their race by that of their Anglo-Saxon conquerors. Nor was the danger fictitious. The Union Act of 1841 declared that the official language should be English, and that documents in French should no longer be preserved in the archives.[2] To avert national disaster, the hapless colonists did instinctively what the European nations had done at the epoch of the Napoleonic wars, they reinvigorated themselves from the sources of their national life. An enthusiasm for the glorious past of their race seized the hearts of the people, an enthusiasm the first fruits of which took the form of historical studies. Of these, by far the most important was the History of Canada published in 1845 by François Xavier Garneau, a production which, by recalling the valiant deeds of their forbears to the minds of the French Canadians, inspired a school of national poetry. The aim of this poetry was, as might be expected, more utilitarian than artistic. "A Canadian writer," observed Octave Crémazie,[3] one of the most prominent poets of the school in question, "must regard himself as amply recompensed for his labours if he can charm and instruct his fellow-country-

[1] The Report of Lord Durham.

[2] See Gérin Lajoie's "Dix ans au Canada."

[3] Crémazie was a bookseller of Quebec without the least aptitude for business. He left Canada after his failure and lived under an assumed name in France where he died in poverty. His verse has been extravagantly praised by misguided English and American writers. Prof. Geddes remarks in his "Canadian-French" that "the analogy so often made between him and *Victor Hugo* is not without reason, for in masterstrokes and in patriotic bursts expressing national feeling, he is certainly the Canadian poet par excellence." Another critic, writing in "The Author" (March 1, 1906), says that Crémazie, whose "Le Vieux Soldat" has been deservedly admired, "has been considered by some in his poem, 'Les Morts,' *the superior of Lamartine.*" Comment on such remarks is needless.

men, and contribute towards the preservation in the New World of the old French nationality." Nor indeed was artistic achievement possible. During the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, French works crossed the Atlantic slowly and in a haphazard manner, and the Canadian writers were by no means capable of critical discernment. As often as not the defects of these productions were copied as carefully as their literary beauties. Crémazie's poem entitled "Mille-Iles," to give only one instance, is a melancholy example of this imperceptive imitation. Desirous of singing the praises of his beloved Saint Laurence, the poet conceived the idea of expressing the joy of a far-wandered swallow on its return to its heart's home among the "Thousand Isles." Unfortunately, however, he remembered the voyages of the famous swallows of Théophile Gautier, and ventured upon what he, in his simplicity, believed to be an imitation of "Ce que disent les hirondelles."[1] The result, as the following lines show, is grotesque to a degree.

"Si j'étais la douce hirondelle
Qui vole en chantant dans les airs,
Quand viendrait engourdir mon aile
Le vent glacé de nos hivers;

. . . . . .

J'irais, au pays des Espagnes,
Là-bas où fleurit l'amandier
Cueillir dans les vertes campagnes
La fleur rouge du grenadier.

J'irais, me posant sur le dôme,
Le dôme d'or de l'Alcazar,
Voir la perle du beau royaume
Où régnait le calife Omar. . . . .
(One must cut short the excursion.)

[1] As M. Ab der Halden points out, the movement of the opening stanza recalls that of a poem in "Les Orientales."

"Si j'étais la feuille que roule
L'aile tournoyante des vents. . . "
(Vœu.)

But,

Ni l'orgueilleuse Andalousie,
Ni les rivages de Cadix
Ni le royaume de Murcie
Etincelant comme un rubis;
. . . . . .

Ni l'Inde et sa riche nature
Où resplendit Para-Brahma,
Ni ces océans de verdure
Que célebrait Kalidasa; . . . . etc.

Ne sauraient jamais me redire
Ce que disent vos échos, ...
O Patrie. . . . "

That Crémazie himself was fully conscious of the insufficiency of French Canadian culture, his correspondence with Abbé Casgrain abundantly proves. "It must be confessed," he wrote, "that in our country people are not very difficult to please in regard to poetry. Rhyme a certain number of times 'gloire' with 'victoire,' 'aïeux' with 'glorieux,' 'France' with 'espérance'; mingle with these rhymes some high-sounding expressions like 'notre religion,' 'notre patrie,' 'notre langue,' 'nos lois,' 'le sang de nos pères;' heat the whole over the fire of patriotism and serve hot. Every one will tell you that it is magnificent."[1]

As a folk poet, however, Crémazie is entitled to respect, and it is not without reason that his narrative poems, "Le Vieux Soldat" and "Le Drapeau du Carillon" have become classic verse to the French Canadian heart and mind.

With the passing of the political crisis,—the Confederation Act of 1867 rendered optional the use of the French language in Parliamentary debates,—the French Canadian poets applied themselves more seriously to the study of their art. The effect of this is clearly manifest in the productions of Louis Honoré

[1] Œuvres Complètes. Beauchemin. Montreal.

Fréchette, who is still considered in French Canada as the laureate of the nation. Fréchette, as the title of his principal work sufficiently indicates, wished to develop the patriotic themes of Crémazie with the aid of a technique closely modelled on that of Victor Hugo. "La Légende d' un Peuple" is a kind of history of Canada in verse, and as such of more than ordinary interest to the general reader. Like the work of Aytoun, it possesses considerable "go" but, as in the case of the "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers," the artistic defects of the production are by no means slight. What M. Lanson calls the "emphatic adjectives" of Victor Hugo flow much too freely from the pen of its author, and such devices as antithesis and enumeration are often employed to the point of excess. Such descriptions of nature as are to be found in the work are purely conventional,[1] and, what is perhaps worse, made to do duty on more than one occasion. The symbolical imagination of Hugo, it need scarcely be added, is nowhere visible.

Among the later productions of the national school of French Canadian poetry, those of Pamphile Le May cannot well be passed over in silence. Le May's chief works are a poetical romance entitled "Tonkourou" (it is also known under its sub-title, "Les Vengeances") and a collection of some hundred sonnets.[2] In both these works, despite their apparent

[1] The following description of the mouth of the River Saint Laurence is perhaps the best in the volume:—

"En face l'eau du fleuve énorme qui s'en vient
Rejaillir sur la proue en gerbes écumantes;
Des ilots dénudés par l'aile des tourmentes;
De grands caps désolés s'avançant dans les flots;
Des brisants sous-marins, effrois des matelots;
Des gorges sans issue où le mystère habite;
Partout l'austérité du désert sans limite,
La solitude morne en sa sublimité."

[2] The following sonnet is one of the best in the collection (Les Gouttelettes:—

"Par la fenêtre ouverte on voit la floraison,
C'est l'heure de la messe, au loin la cloche brille,
Tout le monde est parti; seule, une jeune fille
Vaque aux soins du ménage en la pauvre maison.
Une croix noire pend à la blanche cloison.

naturalism, the didactic tendency of most French Canadian verse is clearly manifest. Although the poet depicts, and often in an interesting manner, the life and customs of his rustic compatriots, an underlying moral is never absent. Le May is at times an eloquent preacher, but he keeps rigidly to his text. In 1880, before an assembly of French Canadian authors, he set forth his literary ideals in the following words:—"Writers, understand your task, and you will have the courage to do your duty. The future of your country depends upon you. It will be what you make it; it will become what you are. You have not to lead a people out of darkness, you have only to encourage it in the way it is going under the ægis of faith. . . . Do not blush at proclaiming your pious beliefs, and the crowd will believe even to martyrdom." And from these ideals Le May never departed.

Of contemporary writers who continue the traditions of Fréchette and Le May, the much-advertised William Chapman is easily the most prominent. One feature, however, and one only, distinguishes his work from that of his predecessors,—it is rarely conventional. M. Chapman possesses a strong, almost an awe-inspiring imagination which, in its wildest flights, transcends all reality or even semblance of reality. Read, for example, this description of the Aurora Borealis:—

"Tout à coup, vers le nord, du vaste horizon pur
Une rose lueur émerge dans l'azur,
Et fluide clavier dont les étranges touches
Battent de l'aile ainsi que des oiseaux farouches,
Eparpillant partout des diamants dans l'air,
Elle envahit le vague océan de l'éther.

Dans son corsage neuf, l'enfant est très gentille.
L'eau bout, la vapeur monte; un chat luisant se grille
Au poêle d'où s'échappe un reflet de tisons.
Mais voici que l'airain tinte dans le ciel rose,
Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus! . . . La jeune fille *pose*
Le chou vert sur un banc, au clou le gobelet.
Sanctus! Sanctus! . . . Avant que la cloche se taise,
Elle tombe aux genoux, et les bras sur sa chaise,
Elle incline sa tête et dit son chapelet."

It will be seen that LeMay is far from being a master of his art.

Aussitôt ce clavier, zébré d'or et d'agate,
Se change en un rideau dont la blancheur éclate,
Dont les replis mœlleux, aussi prompts que l'éclair,
Ondulent follement sur le firmament clair,
Quel est ce voile étrange ou plutôt ce prodige?"

M. Chapman may not be the master-singer of French Canadian poetry; he is certainly the master-magician.[1]

From the Montgomery-like effusions of Chapman, it is somewhat of a relief to turn to the unassuming verse of Alfred Garneau and Nérée Beauchemin. Here, as elsewhere in French Canadian literature, there is much that is unequal; but —and one is glad to acknowledge it—there are also flashes of true poetry. In the lines of Garneau entitled "Wright's Grove," there is an attempt, perhaps the only successful one in all French Canadian verse, at describing landscapes the poet has actually seen. These word-pictures and one of the two sonnets grouped together under the title of "Deux Croquis" are sufficient justification for their author's taking high rank among the poets of his country. We quote with real pleasure from the sonnet in question:

"O fraîche cascatelle! En légers écheveaux
Son onde s'effilait, blanche, à la roche nue,
Puis, sous un rayon d'or un moment retenue,
Elle riait au ciel entre ses bruns roseaux!

Et comme j'inclinais quelques tiges mutines,
Sans bruit, l'oreille ouverte aux rumeurs argentines
Pareilles aux soupirs d'un luth mystérieux,

[1] The following lines from "La Liberté éclairant le monde" contain another delightful example of the poet's love of metamorphosis:—

"Franklin et Fulton ont pris de la sueur
Au front des parias, l'ont changée en vapeur,
En ont fait un géant dont les mains toujours pleines
Sur les flots, dans les champs, sur les monts, dans les plaines,
Dans les hameaux étroits, dans les cités sans fin,
Laisse constamment choir du travail et du pain."

Such examples could be multiplied. In his less exalted moods, however, M. Chapman writes some tolerable, if somewhat commonplace, verse.

Soudain, glissant vers moi sur son aile inquiète
A travers les rameaux, doux et penchant sa tête,
Un rossignol vint boire au flot harmonieux."

As for Beauchemin, however much one may question the strength of his inspiration, it can scarcely be denied that he is a clever artisan in verse. Few poets of French Canada are capable of composing stanzas like the following:—

"Loin des grands rochers noirs que berce la marée,
La mer calme, la mer au murmure endormeur
Au large, tout là-bas, lente s'est retirée
Et son sanglot d'amour dans l'air du soir se meurt."
(La Mer.)

The effect of the alliteration here is wholly charming. In "La Cloche de Louisbourg"[1] and "D'Iberville," Beauchemin has produced two poems of sterling merit.

Towards the end of last century, a brave essay to break away from the somewhat monotonous inspiration of the national school was made by a band of young poets, who endeavoured to acclimatize the "decadent" poetry of France. The attempt, however, was almost a complete failure, partly owing to the unsettled state of the language[2] and partly to the lack of suitable models, modern French poetry being by no means so

[1] We give the opening verses:—

"Cette vieille cloche d'église
Qu'une gloire en larmes encor
Blasonne, brode et fleurdelise,
Rutile à nos yeux comme l'or.

On lit le nom de la marraine,
En traits fleuronnés, sur l'airain,
Un nom de sainte, un nom de reine,
Et puis le prénom du parrain.

C'est une pieuse relique:
On peut la baiser à genoux;
Elle est française et catholique
Comme les cloches de chez nous. . . "

[2] See Appendix VII.

akin, either in thought or diction, to French Canadian verse as is the poetry of England and America to that of English Canada. Too often in the immature productions of this school, it is evident that the writers are using a vocabulary they do not know, to say nothing of venturing upon themes that have no relation at all to Canadian life. Over the effusions of this embryonic parnassus the dust of oblivion is already plenteously spread. One would wish, however, a kindlier fate for the work of the unfortunate Emile Nelligan, a youth who alone of his generation gave promise of becoming the great poet so long awaited by French Canada. Maimed and marred as it is by immaturity and the vices of the school to which it belongs, the verse of this boy—for he was little more—is none the less remarkable for its emotional appeal and the beauty, to an English ear at least, of what would seem to be French diction wedded to English music.[1] Much of Nelligan's work is suggestive of book-inspiration, much also is the outcome of a disordered intellect; but beyond all that there is the terrible cry of a stricken soul, the naked accent of elemental pain. The following lines are fairly characteristic of his work:—

"Ah! comme la neige a neigé!
Ma vitre est un jardin de givre.
Ah! comme la neige a neigé!
Qu' est-ce que le spasme de vivre
A la douleur que j'ai, que j'ai!

Tous les étangs gisent gelés,
Mon âme est noire, où vis-je? où vais-je?
Tous mes espoirs gisent gelés.
Je suis la nouvelle Norwège
D'où les blonds ciels s'en sont allés"

(Soir d'hiver.)

[1] Appreciation of the melody of Nelligan's verse is extremely difficult. Give a poem of his to an *English* student of French poetry and he will find it remarkably harmonious. Give the same poem to a French critic, and he will find it as a rule very much the reverse. Some colour is given to the hypothesis put forward in the text by the fact of Nelligan's being of mixed parentage.

About the beauty of Nelligan's imagery there can be no doubt whatever.

Outside the poetry of Nelligan and that of a contemporary writer, M. Albert Lozeau,[1] French Canada has produced no subjective verse of any consequence.

From the foregoing sketch of the literary history of French Canada, it will be clear why, with few exceptions, the more prominent poets of the French race have confined their energies to historical and didactic themes. Surrounded by a people differing widely from them in language and religion, French Canadians have long been engaged in a relentless struggle to preserve their national characteristics, and it is not unnatural, therefore, that poetry should have been considered by them rather as a means than as an end in itself. Nor, in view of the long separation of the nation from France,[2] and its voluntary iso-

---

"Mais chut! j'entends déjà la mégère Détresse
A notre seuil faisant craquer ses noirs souliers!"

"Et parfois, tout ravis, dans nos palais de foin,
Nous déjeûnions d'aurore et nous soupions d'étoiles."

"De grands chevaux de pourpre erraient, sanguinolents,
Par les célestes turfs, et je tenais, tremblants,
Tes doigts entre mes mains comme un nid d'oiseaux blancs."

"Casqués de leurs shakos de riz,
Vieux de la vieille au mousquet noir,
Les hauts toits, dans l'hivernal soir,
Montent la consigne à Paris."

[1] The following sonnet on Nelligan seems to us one of M. Lozeau's best efforts:—

"Tu montais radieux dans la grande lumière,
Enivré d'idéal, éperdu de beauté,
D'un merveilleux essor de force et de fierté,
Fuyant avec dédain la route coutumière;
Tu montais emporté par ton ardeur première,
Battant d'un vol géant la haute immensité,
Et là, tout près d'atteindre à ton éternité,
Tu planais, triste et beau, dans la clarté plénière.
Mesurant du regard le vaste espace bleu,
Tu sentis la fatigue envahir peu à peu
La précoce vigueur de tes ailes sublimes;
Alors, fermant ton vol largement déployé,
O destin, tu tombas d'abîmes en abîmes,
Comme un aigle royal en plein ciel foudroyé."

[2] "La Capricieuse," which cast anchor in the port of Quebec on the 13th of July, 1855, was the first French vessel to visit Canada after the cession of

lation from the intellectual life of English Canada,[1] is it difficult to understand why French Canadian verse should be somewhat deficient in original thought. That, however, so few poets should have attempted accurate description of the Canadian landscape is not so easily explained. It may be, as Abbé Camille Roy suggests, that the use in schools of imported French text books had the effect of turning aside the attention of the young from the things of their country. What seems at least as likely is that the glamour of "Les Orientales" and works of a similar nature tended to blunt French Canadian perceptibilities. The gaudy Orient had, and has still, many admirers in French Canada.

Limited in range and faulty in execution as is in general French Canadian poetry, it has nevertheless a very definite value in the literature of the Dominion. Without it, epic inspiration would be almost if not entirely lacking. The English colonists "started with the church and the schoolhouse, and made little history in a dramatic sense." They were from the first, as Mr. Stedman says of the Americans, "a wide-awake people removed not only from the superstitions that were a religion to their ancestors but from the wondercraft and simple faith prevailing among the common folk of other lands." In preserving the memory of the venturesome deeds and naïve

the country to England in 1763. See "Le Vieux Soldat Canadien" of Crémazie and "La Capricieuse" of Fréchette.

[1] The following extract from "The Daily News" of September 13th, 1910, notes this fact:—

"Actually there are two cities in Montreal divided by an almost inconceivably rigid and unbroken line of demarcation. There are thousands upon thousands of Protestants who do not know a single Catholic except as they know their grocer and the civil official who collects their taxes. And there are thousands of Catholics who never exchange an idea with a Protestant, and never use the Protestant's language except to buy or sell some commodity of trade. . . . Not a French newspaper dares to publish anything that would offend the powers-that-be or to keep on its staff a writer to whom exception is taken. . . . English papers are not censored, but they are hardly ever seen by the French Canadian, his own tastes and the guidance of his clergy both deterring him."

See also Siegfried's "Race Question in Canada," and Sir J. Bourinot's "Canada."

superstitions of their forefathers, French Canadian writers have not only supplied a historical background for Canadian literature in particular but they have rendered no slight service to that larger world of letters which recognizes no barriers either of language or race. There is scarcely a poet of the Dominion, be he French or English, who has not sung the exploits of such national heroes as Daulac and Montcalm, while the names of Longfellow and Gilbert Parker owe much of their enduring lustre to the glamour of French Canadian romance.[1]

The literary history of English Canada may be said to begin with the coming of the United Empire Loyalists, a vast body of American colonists who, after the War of Independence, abandoned hearth and home in order to remain British subjects. By 1786, it has been estimated that between forty and fifty thousand people, drawn mainly from the New England states, reached British North America, among them being many who had occupied positions of influence and responsibility in their respective communities. Before the arrival of the United Empire Loyalists, the Anglo-Saxon population of Canada consisted mainly of officials and traders, and was vastly outnumbered by the Canadian French inhabitants. The New England element thus introduced into Canada has played no small part in moulding the destinies of the nation. In politics, it has ever provided the Dominion with a body of men uncompromisingly hostile to all projects savouring, however remotely, of union or confederation with the neighbouring Republic; in literature, it has given to English Canada her greatest poet—Bliss Carman, who is by almost unanimous consent "head and shoulders" above all his rivals, being, both on the paternal and maternal side, of pure New England descent. In view, then, of the great importance

[1] Of Canadian writers drawing inspiration from French Canadian sources, William Kirkby and Wilfred Campbell are perhaps the most prominent. Campbell has translated into English verse several portions of Fréchette's "La Légende d'un Peuple." He has also written several plays dealing with French Canadian themes. Charles Roberts has translated into English the interesting work of De Gaspé, "Les Anciens Canadiens."

"The Refugees" of Mr. Conan Doyle, the English novelist, has its plot laid in French Canada.

as a literary event—with its political significance one has, of course, nothing to do—of the coming to Canada of the United Empire Loyalists, let us cast a glance over the intellectual history of the communities whence these people came.

Among the four northern colonies, known collectively as New England, the principal, Massachusetts, may serve as the type of all. "It was," to quote from Francis Parkman,[1] "a mosaic of little village republics, firmly cemented together into a single body politic through representatives sent to the 'General Court' at Boston. Its government, originally theocratic, now (at the epoch of the Conquest of Canada) tended to democracy, ballasted as yet by strong traditions of respect for established worth and ability, as well as by the influence of certain families prominent in affairs for generations. Yet there was no distinct class lines, and popular power, like popular education, was widely diffused. Practically, Massachusetts was almost independent of the mother country. Its people were purely English, of sound yeoman stock, with an abundant leaven drawn from the best of the Puritan gentry; but their original character had been somewhat modified by changed conditions of life. A harsh and exacting creed, with its stiff formalism and its prohibition of wholesome recreation; excess in the pursuit of gain,—the only source left to energies robbed of their natural play; the struggle for existence on a hard and barren soil; and the isolation of a narrow village life,—joined to produce, in the meaner sort, qualities which were unpleasant and sometimes repulsive. . . . Nevertheless while New England's Puritanism bore its peculiar crop of faults, it produced also many good and sound fruits. An uncommon vigour, joined to the hardy virtues of a masculine race, marked the New England type. . . . The staple of character was a sturdy conscientiousness, and undespairing courage, patriotism, public spirit, sagacity, and a strong good sense."

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1 "Montcalm and Wolfe," Vol. I., page 28 *et seq.* (Parkman.)

The New Englanders had been, moreover, a literary *people* from the first;[1] many of them wrote verse, printing their works either in London or by means of primitive presses along the coast. Nor was high thinking uncommon,—"Massachusetts" to quote again Parkman, "had produced Edwards, who out of the grim theology of Calvin mounted to sublime heights of mystical speculation."[2]

The United Empire Loyalists—the flame bearers, as one might term them, of New England culture to Canada—settled mainly in the maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,[3] precisely those provinces, let us remark in passing, that subsequent immigration from Europe has left comparatively untouched.

During the period of struggle that followed the arrival of the Loyalists down to the Union Act of 1867, men had little time to devote to literature. First there was the American War of 1813, and then followed long years of bitter political strife.[4] The resumption, however, of friendly relations with the United States, if not immediately productive of literary activity in Canada, at least tended to quicken the seeds of such activity; for, politics apart, not only was the culture of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia essentially the same as that of the neighbouring New England states,[5] but it was at this epoch that the literary

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1 "Poets of America." (Stedman.)

2 "Montcalm and Wolfe," Vol. I. (Parkman.)

3 For an account in verse of the coming of the Loyalists, see the poem of Arthur Wentworth Eaton, "The Re-settlement of Acadia."

"....the simple Norman peasant-folk shall till the land no more,
For the vessels from Connecticut have anchored by the shore,
And many a sturdy Puritan, his mind with Scripture stored,
Rejoices he has found at last 'his garden of the Lord.'"

. . . . . .

They come with hearts as true as their manners blunt and cold,
To found a race of noble men of stern New England mould,
A race of earnest people, whom the coming years shall teach
The broader ways of knowledge and the gentler forms of speech.

4 For an account of the intellectual activity of this period, see Bourinot's "Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness," chap. iii.

5 It may be that M. André Siegfried was thinking of these eastern

genius of the latter came to full fruition. Unlike the "habitants" of Québec, the New England population of Canada did not lack for long the inspiration given by master-singers of their own tradition. Nor when at last Canada-by-the-sea broke into song, did its poets experience to a like degree the difficulty of their Gallic compatriots in finding markets for their wares. Montreal, with its commercial mind, might be ungrateful, and London too far away; but there were always Boston and New York, where a tendency to welcome native American productions was already exhibiting itself.[1] How precious this advantage really was, may be inferred from the fact that all the more important of English Canadian poets, with perhaps the exception of Charles Mair, have published their works in the States.

In insisting thus on the stimulating influence that American (and more especially New England) culture has exerted on Canadian letters, we are by no means oblivious of the heavy debt that the latter owe to the energy and scholarship of numerous British-born Canadians. The presence of such men maintained direct intercourse with the intellectual world of England, and gave, moreover, to the Dominion an educational system based largely on British ideals.[2] One must protest, however, against the common assumption that these colonial English laid the foundations of Anglo-Saxon Canadian literature and that, in consequence, the latter is a mere outgrowth of the larger literature of England. The British civilization of Canada was the first, it is true, to show definite literary proclivities, and it has undoubtedly superimposed its culture upon the older

provinces of the Dominion when he wrote:—"If isolation is comparatively easy for our race, it is impossible for the English Canadians. . . . The towns to the north and the south of the frontier are astonishingly alike. The private life of the English Canadians is modelled to a great extent on that of their American neighbours; their occupations, recreations, taste, prejudices, are all the same." ("Race Question in Canada," pages 125-6.)

Many inhabitants of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia send their sons to the University of Harvard.

1 See "Poets of America." (Stedman.)

2 See Bourinot's "Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness," chap v., and the chapter on Education in Bourinot's "Canada."

civilization of the New England settlements; but, although it has produced numerous poetasters, it has yet to produce a great poet.

From the foregoing remarks, it will be evident that the conditions obtaining in English Canada are, and have always been, more favourable to literary activity than those prevailing in the French-speaking provinces. The civilization introduced by the early Anglo-Saxon settlers was, as we have seen, at once higher and less isolated than that of their Gallic compatriots,[1] initial advantages that time has only increased. With the recent growth of immigration, moreover, and the consequent more assured nationality of the Anglo-Saxon population, English Canadians have been freer than the inhabitants of Québec to devote their energies to literary pursuits. From the determinist point of view, therefore, one should expect English Canadian poetry to attain a higher degree of excellence than French Canadian poetry, an expectation that an examination of the principal Anglo-Saxon productions does not prove unfounded.

The first poet of English Canada of national importance was Charles Sangster, a contemporary of Crémazie, who, if his note was no less crude than that of the French writer, exhibited a far higher appreciation of the beauty and majesty of the Canadian landscape. After Sangster, and due doubtless to the exigences of the political situation, there is little native verse of any importance until one reaches the work of Charles Mair and John Reade. With the productions of Alexander McLachlan and Charles Heavysege, the former a popular and colourless versifier and the latter a dramatist of some talent, we have nothing to do; they are not Canadian, or at least only Canadian by courtesy.[2] The powerful descriptive work of Charles Mair

[1] For a comparison of New England culture and French Canadian culture at the epoch of the Conquest, see Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe," Vol. I.

[2] McLachlan was born and educated in Scotland, and came to Canada when a young man.

Heavysege was a journalist of English birth. The North British Review for August, 1858, speaks of "Saul" as follows:—

"Of 'Saul,' a drama in three parts, published anonymously at Montreal,

lifts him easily above any of his predecessors. Mair, who possessed a first-hand acquaintance with prairie life, seems to have been a kind of Canadian Rousseau, for whom "great Nature's man content with Nature's food" was vastly preferable to the "ministers of mischief and of might" who slay

> ". . . . with equal mirth
> The harmless or the hurtful things of earth
> In the dead fruition of their mad desire."

"The Last Bison," from which these lines are taken, is a fine piece of work which manifests a keenness of observation combined with no mean literary power. We give a characteristic passage of natural description:

> "A gentle vale, with rippling aspens clad,
> Yet open to the breeze, invited rest,
> So there I lay and watched the sun's fierce beams
> Reverberate in wreathed ethereal flame;
> Or gazed upon the leaves which buzzed o'erhead
> Like tiny wings in simulated flight.
> Within the vale a lakelet, lashed with flowers,
> Lay like a liquid eye amongst the hills,
> Revealing in its depths, the fulgent light
> Of snowy cloudland and cerulean skies.
> And rising, falling, fading far around,
> The homeless and unfurrowed prairies spread
> In solitude and idleness eterne."

Descriptive work of this calibre is not to be found in the poetical effusions of any of Mair's contemporaries. We regret we are unable to share the enthusiasm of Canadian writers for the descriptions of Isabella Crawford, a lady-singer of the period. Occasionally, as in the following passage, one encounters a happy inspiration:—

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we have before us perhaps the only copy which has crossed the Atlantic. At all events we have heard of no other, as it is probable we should have done, through some public or private notice, seeing that the work is indubitably one of the most remarkable English poems ever written out of Great Britain."

"The keen two-bladed moon
Of falling leaves roll'd up on crested mists;
And where the lush rank boughs had foiled the sun
In his red prime, her sharp fingers crept
After the wind, and felt about the moss,
And seem'd to pluck from shrinking twig and stem
The burning[1] leaves . . . ."

More usually, however, the imagination of the poetess blurs the picture she wishes to transcribe. At times also the imagery is in none too good taste:

"Day was at her high unrest;
Fevered with the wine of light;
Loosing all her golden vest
Reeled she towards the coming night."

Of the graceful subjective verse of John Reade we can only make cursory mention. Without being in any way great, it exhibits a delicacy of feeling that is somewhat lacking in the other productions of the period.[2] Among the historical poems of Reade, "Madeleine de Verchères" is noteworthy as showing the growing attention that English Canadian poets were giving to French Canadian themes. The writer, however, in whose work the French Canadian inspiration is most marked is William Kirkby, who, although of English birth, laboured conscientiously both in prose and in verse to nationalize the epic history of the early colonists. He was the precursor, in this respect, of George Martin, Arthur Wentworth Eaton, George Murray, and many other ardent, if not particularly original, singers of French Canadian romance. Such versifiers did much to create a feeling of national unity.

The first of modern English Canadian poets was George

[1] The scarlet maple leaves.

[2] See the lines, "In My Heart," quoted by Bourinot in "Our Intellectual Strength and Weakness."

Frederick Cameron. He was a Nova Scotian by birth, and studied law in Boston. A passionate love of freedom and an inveterate hatred of all oppression are the more prominent characteristics of his verse. The form of his work is often without polish, but he lacks neither force nor tenderness.[1]

A more cultured poet was the nature-loving Archibald Lampman, an Ontario writer of Loyalist and German descent. Lampman was an ardent student of Keats, and the sensuous note of the English poet is a distinctive feature of all his work. Lines like the following might well have been written by the author of "Endymion" had he been fortunate enough to have known the delights of a Canadian spring:—

"The grey song-swallows, full of spring, have sung
Their clear thin silvery tunes in leafless trees;
The robin hops and whistles, and among
The silver-tasselled poplars the brown bees
Murmur faint dreams of summer harvestries;
The creamy sun at even scatters down
A gold-green mist across the murmuring town."

[1] The following passages from "What matters it" will serve to exemplify the manner of Cameron:—

"What reck we of the creeds of men?—
We see them—we shall see again.
What reck we of the tempest's shock?
What reck we where our anchor lock?
On golden marl or mould—
In salt-sea flower or riven rock—
What matter —so it hold?

What matters it the spot we fill
On Earth's green sod when all is said?—
When feet and hands and heart are still
And all our pulses quieted?
When hate or love can kill nor thrill,—
When we are done with life and dead?

. . . . . .

For we shall rest; the brain that planned,
That thought or wrought or well or ill,
At gaze like Joshua's moon shall stand,
Not working any work or will,
While eye and lip and heart and hand
Shall all be still—shall all be still!"

Yet, if Lampman be a disciple of Keats, and, be it added, no unworthy one, he is at the same time thoroughly Canadian in much of his subject matter. The orchestras of frogs, which are a notable feature of settlement life, are nowhere more accurately or more delightfully treated than in his poems. Lampman may not be an original poet, but one never tires of reading his nature verse. Greater poets than he would have been proud of having written this description of the piping of the frogs in spring:—

". . . . like high flutes in silvery interchange,
Ye piped with voices still and sweet and strange,
And ever as ye piped, on every tree
The great buds swelled; among the pensive woods
The spirits of first flowers awoke, and flung
From buried faces the close-fitting hoods,
And listened to your piping till they fell;
The frail spring beauty, with her perfumed bell,
The wind flower, and the spotted adder tongue."

Of contemporary English Canadian poets, Charles G. D. Roberts, another singer of the old Loyalist stock, was the first to gain the ear of the English public. Nor is this to be wondered at, for no one has given more strenuous utterance to the Canadian national spirit.[1] His first volume, moreover, earned not entirely undeserved praise from Matthew Arnold. In his early verse, Roberts exhibited the tendency shown by most later Canadian poets of endeavouring to re-handle the classical themes of the English masters and, in consequence, was charged by some critics with lack of originality. However just such a charge was when made against the first volume, it was certainly refuted by the succeeding books, in all of which Roberts has revealed literary powers of uncommon strength.

[1] The lines of Roberts on "Canada" have become famous:

"But thou, my Country, dream not thou!
Wake, and behold how night is done,—
How on thy breast, and o'er thy brow,
Bursts the uprising sun!"

Among his many gifts, the poet possesses a vivid metaphysical imagination of an Emersonian stamp, and this, combined with his intimate knowledge of Nature, has produced some very striking verse. "Kinship" is a poem one would fain quote *in extenso* did space permit; to cite merely a verse or two would be doing the poet an injustice. In objective description of the Canadian landscape, again, Roberts easily outstrips all rivals, English or French. It is, however, in his powerful love poems, such as the beautiful "Nocturne of Consecration," and in his "Ode for the Shelley Centenary,"[1] that he reaches his high water mark, for there he adds to his other charms the necessary magic of melody,[2] and almost, the elusive touch of genius.

A strong talent for dealing with subjects of an awe-inspiring or tragic nature and a lofty seriousness of purpose are the chief characteristics of Wilfred Campbell, a poet whose work has recently met with high appreciation both in England and America. There is something of the stern Scotch Calvinist about Campbell despite the fact that his religious beliefs have

[1] We give the first two stanzas:—

"O tranquil meadows, grassy Tantramar,
Wide marshes ever washed in clearest air,
Whether beneath the sole and spectral star
The dear severity of dawn you wear,
Or whether in the joy of ample day
And speechless ecstasy of growing June
You lie and dream the long blue hours away
Till nightfall comes too soon,
Or whether, naked to the starry night,
You strike with wondering awe my inward sight.

You know how I have loved you, how my dreams
Go forth to you with longing, through the years
That turn not back like your returning streams
And fain would mist the memory with tears,
Though the inexorable years deny
My feet the fellowship of your deep grass,
O'er which, as o'er another, tenderer sky,
Cloud phantoms drift and pass,—
You know my confident love, since first, a child,
Amid your wastes of green I wandered wild."

[2] We do not mean that Roberts' verse is as a rule inharmonious but that it lacks "song quality."

been moulded to some extent by the broad-minded New England Puritan, James Russell Lowell. Like many other English Canadian poets, he is too apt at times to challenge comparison with the greater voices of England and America;[1] but his purely Canadian work, the finest examples of which are to be found in his "Lake Lyrics," is full of genuine poetry.[2] Such descriptive pieces as "How Spring came to the Lake Region" are very definite contributions to the literature of his country.

The poetry of Roberts and Campbell differs from that of their predecessors in what may roughly be termed its pantheistic outlook. Both poets, like Wordsworth, are conscious of

> "A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

And both, again, feel that this spirit in them and through them is endeavouring to compass its vast ideals. The influence of Emersonian philosophy is everywhere apparent in their work. Take these lines of Roberts:—

[1] Such themes as "Sir Lancelot" are too suggestive of the "Idyls of the King," and Campbell, good poet as he is, is not a Tennyson. "Sebastian Cabot" reminded us too vividly of Lowell's "Columbus."

[2] The following lyric, entitled "A Lake Memory," will serve as an example of Campbell's poetry. His tragic pieces are unfortunately too long to quote here:—

> "The lake comes throbbing in with voice of pain
> Across these flats, athwart the sunset's glow.
> I see her face, I know her voice again,
> Her lips, her breath, O God, as long ago
>
> To live the sweet past over would I fain,
> As lives the day in the red sunset's fire,
> That all these wild, wan marshlands now would stain,
> With the dawn's memories, loves and flushed desire.
>
> I call her back across the vanished years,
> Nor vain—a white-armed phantom fills her place;
> Its eyes the wind-blown sunset fires, its tears
> This rain of spray that blows about my face."

"Not only in the cataract and the thunder,
Or in the deeps of man's uncharted soul,
But in the dew-star dwells alike the wonder,
And in the whirling dust-mote the control."

Or these stanzas of Campbell's:—

"That something subtle that outweighs
The mightiest lore of man;
That master of his dreams and days,
Invisible in some weird haze
Behind his bliss or ban,

. . . . . .

Hath burgeoned beauty from the blind
Deep earthly woodland's heart;
This inward flame that wings the wind,
Great in comparison to mind
As Nature unto Art."

This pantheism would seem, however, to be something more than a mere reflection of Emersonian thought. It would appear to be inspired in part, or at least fostered, by the sensational consciousness of the poets that all things are swayed by one power. The following lines from Roberts' "Origins" will show what is meant:—

". . . through the common grass
Our atoms mix and pass.
We feel the sap go free
When spring comes to the tree;
And in our blood is stirred
What warms the brooding bird.

. . . . . .

. . . in the urge intense
And fellowship of sense,
Suddenly comes a word
In other ages heard.
On a great wind our souls
Are borne to unknown goals."

One may find a close parallel in the poems of the American writer, Richard Hovey. In the poem on Spring, Hovey exclaims: "The sap is in the boles to-day, And in my veins a pulse that yearns and goads." It was just this "fellowship of sense," one fancies, that gave rise in part also to the characteristic habit of later English Canadian poets of regarding the lower forms of life as their lesser kin. Such phrases as "little brothers of the clod" and "little comrades of the sky" are to be met with everywhere. This frank recognition of the kinship of nature is a dominant note of Bliss Carman, to a study of whose work, passing over with reluctance the verse of Duncan Campbell Scott[1] and that of many scarcely less distinguished writers, we intend to devote the following pages.

In the verse of the large majority of Canadian poets, English and French, although the matter be not infrequently new and interesting, the manner and outlook of the poet are rarely distinctive enough. To state the case bluntly, there is too often a suggestion of old friends with new faces. To this rule, the poems of Carman are for the most part striking and noteworthy exceptions. In them, there is something more than skilled craftsmanship, something more even than imaginative power or intellectual brilliancy; there is what must be prized far above any of these qualities,—the rare and vital individuality of genius.

[1] We cannot refrain from quoting this delightful sample of Scott's work:

"A brook hung sparkling on the hill,
The hill swept far to ring the bay;
The bay was faithful, wild or still,
To the heart of the ocean far away.

There were three pines above the comb
That, when the sun flared and went down,
Grew like three warriors reaving home
The plunder of a burning town."

(The Cove.)

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE AND ANCESTRY OF BLISS CARMAN.

BLISS CARMAN was born in 1861 at Fredericton, New Brunswick, in the heart of the old Acadian land where still dwell the descendants of those sturdy New England puritans who, four or five generations ago, sailed up the Bay of Fundy and built the town of St. John. Both on the paternal and on the maternal side, the poet is of pure New England stock. His ancestors were Tories in their American communities, men of substance and education who opposed the War of Independence. Naturally, when their side lost, they were in high disfavour, their lands and chattels were often confiscated, and they themselves driven out of a country that was too hot to hold them.

The first pastor of the young colony in Concord, Mass., was the Rev. Daniel Bliss. His son Daniel was the prominent Tory lawyer, one of the chief opponents of the Adamses and the Revolution. His son, again, was John Murray Bliss, the grandfather of the poet's mother, whose maiden name was Sophia Mary Bliss. These Blisses settled on the St. John River near Fredericton. A paternal ancestor of the poet bought lands from the Indians on Long Island, and was one of the first settlers of Hempstead. A descendant of his, Richard Carman, was one of the first grantees of the present city of St. John, N.B. It is with a heart "warmed with deep ancestral fires" that the poet thinks ever of this old seaport.

> "Loyalists, my fathers, builded
> This gray port of the gray sea,
> When the duty to ideals
> Could not let well-being be."

Cradled amid delightful scenes of valley, marsh, and mountain, the poet entered early upon that mystical intimacy with Nature which has exercised so potent an influence upon his thought and art. In Spring, the little meadow flowers whispered to him of innocence and love; in Autumn, the scarlet maples spoke to him of the goodliness of courage; while ever and always the restless sea crooned him "tales of the long ago and far away." Spirtualized by him, Nature became the great consoler of his sensitive soul,—an inexhaustible source of joy, strength, and faith.

"O Mother, I have loved thee without fear
And looked upon the mystery of change
Since first, a child, upon the closing year
I saw the snowflakes fall and whispered, 'Strange!'"

Nor did the kindly fates who preside over the destinies of men entrust this child of nature to unsympathetic teachers. He began Latin at home at about eight or nine, and can well remember his father, who was then over sixty, dusting his old Latin dictionary to give him his first lesson. Afterwards he was tutored by an older boy for some time, and then, in 1872, entered the Collegiate School, in Fredericton, the headmaster of which was a cultured man of letters and, what is perhaps of even greater consequence, an ardent lover of open-air life. To Dr. George R. Parkin, Carman owes a large debt, and one which he gratefully acknowledges in a dedicatory preface to "The Kinship of Nature."

"Here is one of your boys," he writes to his old master, "come to tender you an offering long overdue, making acknowledgment of grateful indebtedness never really to be repaid. For the service you did him is, next to the gift of life, the greatest that one man can render another. . . . Let me ask you to recall those occasions long ago when we wished to surprise you with some token of our bashful affection and to

think of this prefatory letter as an echo of that happy time. . . .''[1]

"Those were the days when we were all young together, whether at Greek or at football, tramping for mayflower through the early Spring woods, paddling on the river in intoxicating Junes, or snowshoeing across bitter drifts in the perishing December wind,—always under the leadership of your indomitable ardour. In that golden age we first realized the kinship of Nature, whose help is for ever unfailing and whose praise is never outsung. I must remind you too of those hours in the class-room, where the Æneid was often interrupted by the Idyls of the King or The Blessed Damozel, and William Morris or Arnold or Swinburne's latest lyric came to us between the lines of Horace. . . . It is certain that you gave us whatever solace or inspiration there is in the classics or modern letters, and set our feet in the devious aisles of the enchanted groves of the muses.''

During these halcyon days, the poet was, as he is still, an ardent canoeist,[2] and few knew better than he the "wildcat

[1]The following extract from a recent article of Carman in "The Literary Miscellany" sheds some light on this period.

"In my dreamful youth, when it was required of us to be diligent over our books, I found no hardship in reading, and the morning hours were ever the richest and most enchanted of all. To get up with the sun in the summer, while all the neighbourhood slept, and sit in the bedroom window overlooking an old rose garden where elm trees hung and purple martins bickered, poring over Virgil or Euclid, Cæsar or Xenophon, was no task at all. There were shadows traversing the sides of the hills, just as Virgil saw them nearly two thousand years ago. Here, if one had the wit to cross the *pons asinorum*, lay a whole new world of wondrous truth, outspreading in the distance like an unexplored continent before the gaze of a discoverer on a lofty divide. And who, having followed the track of the Ten Thousand, but must feel his blood quicken with that joyous shout, *Thalassa, Thalassa!* as the home-long warriors beheld once more their sparkling sea.

Such study was not toil, but the wholesome of a normal imagination wisely kindled with the poetry of morning and already appreciating the solace and nutriment of books.

Such training lasts."

(Autumn, 1911.)

[2] Lighthall in the introduction to his "Canadian Poems," an anthology, quaintly styles the poet's cousin, Charles Roberts, "poet, *canoeist*, and Professor of Literature." The combination is charmingly redolent of the country.

rapids" and stilly coverts of the Acadian streams. It was no hearsay knowledge of river-craft that in after years found artistic expression in "The Wraith of the Red Swan," a strange, eerie poem written round the loss of a favourite canoe.

From the little world of school, the poet, in 1878, passed with distinction to the larger world of the university. (As head of the school, he had taken the school medal for Greek and Latin.) In an epistolary poem written about this time, Charles Roberts, the cousin of the poet, refers in the following terms to Carman's entering of the University of New Brunswick:—

"Last week in its first youth, saw you begin
Your happy three years' course with us, and win
The highest honours, half of which are due
To your own strength of brain, and half accrue
To that wise master from whose hands you came
Equipped to win, and win yourself a name."

At College, the poet read for honours in classics and, for the first two years, in mathematics also. He succeeded in gaining the Gold Medal for Latin prose, and graduated in 1881. After a year's private study, Carman took a post graduate course at the University of Edinburgh (1882-3), where he was deeply impressed by the lectures of P. G. Tait and George Crystal. He also listened to Campbell Fraser, and had the good fortune to hear the beloved and never-to-be-forgotten Professor Blackie give his farewell lecture.

Coming back to Canada, Carman taught, did engineering work in the field, studied law at Fredericton, and in 1886 went to the University of Harvard. At Harvard, the poet sat at the feet of Royce, the philosopher, and Francis J. Child, the professor of English, and came to have a great affection for Cambridge and Boston.

On leaving Harvard, the poet entered upon a journalistic career and, from 1890 to 1892, was on the staff of the Independent, of New York. In 1894, he went back to Boston for a

while, and was one of the men who started The Chap-Book, the first of the now-numerous pocket periodicals. After this comparatively brief spell of journalism, Carman forsook the editorial chair for the freer calling of an independent man of letters.

Between 1892 and 1897, the poet spent much of the winter in Washington at the home of the American poet Richard Hovey, who lived there with his father and mother, and much of his time in summer in the Grand Pré country in Nova Scotia. In Hovey, a man of strong character and a poet of rare ability, Carman found a companion after his own heart,

> "Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
> And full of the mellow juice of life,
>
> A taster of wine, with an eye for a maid,
> Never too bold, and never afraid,
>
> No fidget and no reformer, just
> A calm observer of ought and must,
>
> A lover of books, but a reader of man,
> No cynic and no charlatan."

One outcome of this friendship was the series of "Songs from Vagabondia," in which Hovey collaborated; but there can be little doubt that the influence of the genial American poet over his Canadian colleague has been, despite the untimely death of the former, both deep and lasting. In the Songs, it is difficult to set apart the contributions of the two writers, so harmoniously does the manner of each blend with that of the other.

Of the private life of the poet, interesting glimpses may be obtained in his works,—the only source of information of which, in the case of a contemporary, biography can with propriety avail itself. Although now nominally domiciled in the New England of his forefathers, Carman is of those for whom the world is vagabondia, and his heart ever cries out for

the sane joys of the "Open Road." That this "wander-lust" has led him far afield at times is evident from the descriptions of West Indian scenery in "A Winter's Holiday" and the occasional references to a delightful sojourn in Europe which are to be found here and there in his works. Stray where he will, however, the poet is completely satisfied only in his beloved Acadia within sound of the plangent tides and among the little orchards that sleep in peace beneath the shadows of the sentinel hills. He is a true Canadian at heart.

"Northward, crow,
Croak and fly!
Tell her I
Long to go,—

Only am
Satisfied
Where the wide
Maples flame

Over those
Hills of fir,
Flooding her
Morning snows."

That a poet's life in hustling America is not exactly a bed of roses, one can well imagine; still, it is devoutly to be hoped that the "Letter to the Lyric Muse from an Imaginary Correspondent" is a mere figment. "Nearly twenty years ago," writes this heart broken votary, "a young man at Harvard began to give his days to the cultivation of poetry, infatuated by the glamour of your fame and beauty, and tasted the first-fruits of ambition when a string of his verses appeared in the Atlantic, your favourite periodical. Since then he has had little other occupation than to do your will and preach your worship in the world. One would suppose that in that time he might have achieved a position of some substance and security, such as men in other professions attain in half the time. Such is

hardly the case, however. . . . During the years spent in your service, I have had the workman's three meals a day; if I have not been elegantly dressed, I have certainly been decently clothed most of the time; and if I have had neither horse nor house to call my own, I have at least not slept in squalor. If such modest equipment as I have enjoyed could still be honestly maintained, all would be very well indeed. But as a matter of fact, my actual and unavoidable account with society shows a considerable balance on the wrong side of the book, with a tendency to increase rather than to diminish with the passing years. This, of course, neither of us can afford to tolerate. We who profess to set so much store by the finer ideals, can hardly shirk the most ordinary demands of fairplay in the daily conduct of affairs. . . . You seen then the very good reason for my apparent abandonment of your favour and your cause. And I trust to your larger wisdom for ample forgiveness, if for the future I transfer much of my labour and my allegiance to your less distinguished but more opulent sister, the muse of prose."

Very much brighter pictures are those of the poet's life at "Moonshine," the residence of Mrs. Mary King,[1] and at "Tortoise Shell," the home of one of his artist friends. The verses that celebrate a sojourn at the latter dwelling may not be good poetry but, as the homely phrase has it, they do one's heart good.

We'll let the hooting blizzard shout;
We'll pull the little table out;

And Andrew Usher, ever blest,
Shall comfort us beneath the vest.

So trim the light, and build the fire;
Bring out your oldest, sweetest briar.
. . . . . .

[1] See Appendix II.

And Time may learn another trick
To better his arithmetic,

When wise content subtracts a notch
For fuming weed and foaming Scotch. . . .

On the trail with "an open hard, an easy shoe" or between the four walls of some friendly domicile, the poet is ever a particularly human immortal,—at once an artist and a man.

Unlike most poets of distinction, Carman made no attempt to gain the ear of the public until his genius was thoroughly matured. The first poem to attract any notice was "Low Tide on Grand Pré," written in Nova Scotia and printed in the Atlantic while the poet was at Harvard. The first volume of poems, which took its title from this lyric, was not published until 1893. Since this date, Carman's output has been both constant and considerable, amounting to some fourteen books of verse and four of prose. In this rich poetic achievement, although the general trend of the thought remains fairly constant throughout, the artistic manner varies considerably. It must not be thought, however, that such changes in manner indicate one of those chameleon-like talents which take their colour from favourite haunts in the realms of literature. It is not so. The poetry of Carman, at its best, is wholly individual and spontaneous. His are indeed

". . . . the lyric songs
The earth-born children sing,
When the wild-wood laughter throngs
The shy bird-throats of Spring.

When there's not a joy of the heart
But flies like a flag unfurled,
And the swelling buds bring back
The April of the world."

CHAPTER III.

THE EVOLUTION OF CARMAN'S THOUGHT.

THE work of Bliss Carman considered as a record of the evolution of his thought falls easily into three periods. The early poems of Low Tide on Grand Pré show the poet at one with Nature; conscious, as Mr. Stopford Brooke remarks Browning was at times, of being "a living piece of the great organism, having his own rejoicing life in the mightier life which includes him; and feeling with the rest the abounding pleasure of continuous life reaching up through growth to higher forms of being, swifter powers of living." The poems of "Behind the Arras" mark a temporary rupture of this close intimacy with Nature and a period of depression and doubt. Having once, however, known joy and confidence, the poet believes in their existence and works towards their recovery. He analyses his former experiences, and on the results of this analysis builds up a philosophy of life. The following volumes indicate that this philosophy has stood the test of practice, and are all more or less expository of its principles.

. . . . . .

The poems of Low Tide, we have said, show the poet at one with Nature. This may be seen in the way his heart vibrates, as it were, in sympathy with the moods of the "Great Mother." He has his own personal emotions, it is true, but everywhere these emotions are modified by the influence of the season. For him, with his singularly alert senses, "the year in its ebb and flow is the pulse beat of the universe."[1] If December and gloom be inevitable, no less so are April and joy.[2] Sorrow for love which has "passed into the outer strait"

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[1] See the essay entitled "Rhythm" in "The Kinship of Nature."

[2] See the lyric entitled "The Pensioners."

"... all year through with starveling care
We go on some fool's idle quest,

may cause him to eat his bread with tears through the long winter months; but when the buds are breaking and the thrushes singing in the glad prime of the year, grief gives place to rapture and despair to renewal of hope. In one lyric he speaks of man as being a pensioner of Spring, meaning thereby that, at that season, man receives from the Gods their annual largess of being and inspiration. Then we must

> Forget we are not where old joys
> Return when dawns and dreams retire;
> Make grief a phantom of regret,
> And fate the henchman of desire;
>
> Divorce unreason from delight;
> Learn how despair is uncontrol,
> Failure the shadow of remorse,
> And death a shudder of the soul.

There is something very Canadian about all this. "It is only in the North," says the poet in one of his essays, "that we fully love the Spring. After iron months of unremitting struggle with the giant cold, the spirit is glad when relief comes at length; and the season of returning vitality has a festal charm all its own." A little later he goes on to say, "long inheritance of April happiness has given us that peculiar malady we call spring fever." What is this? We believe the poet explains the term in another essay when he remarks, "there come to us, deep in the heart, familiar but uncomprehended promptings to vagabondage, to fresh endeavour, to renewal of life and wider prospects." How far these "promptings to vagabondage" are characteristic

---

> And eat her bread and wine in thrall
> To a fool's shame with blind unrest.
>
> Until her April train goes by,
> And then . . . .
>
> Because her heart as our own heart,
> Knowing the same wild upward stir,
> Beats joyward by eternal laws,
> We must arise and go with her."

(Cf. "As the earth vibrates in her course from autumnal to vernal equinox our heart vibrates between misgiving and elation."
(Rhythm—The Kinship of Nature.)

experiences of the Canadian people[1] we do not know, but at any rate we have no doubt whatever that they are characteristic experiences of the poet himself. In Spring and in Autumn, he is wholly possessed by something very much akin to the primitive migrant instinct. Speaking of the gay procession of April life, he says, in "The Pensioners,"

> ". . . . because we are the kin
> Of every hill flower on the hill
> We must arise and walk therein."

Spring, however, not only arouses the nomad in the poet, it awakes the artist in him also. As the seeds stir in the kindly earth and the sap mounts in the trees, desire for beauty smoulders into flame in his heart.[2] It is this combination of "wander-lust" and æsthetic craving which gives rise in the poet to the characteristic conception that all things are vagrants, as it were, in quest of the Ideal. "The trail is far through leagues of Spring and long the quest to the white core of harvest quiet,"[3] but, "desire shall lead us home from far."[4] The Autumn will come when the need awakened by Spring shall be satisfied, for the need was awakened in order to be satisfied.[5] This quest of beauty is exemplified on a small scale in the lyric entitled "Apple Time."

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1 Compare the lines of C. G. D. Roberts which we have already quoted.
"We feel the sap go free, etc."

2 That the "desire" of the poet is really a craving for beauty is clearly indicated in all the later volumes. In "Sursum Corda" (The Green Book of the Bards), one finds the lines:

> "Within him (man) the sweet disquiet,
> Before him the old dismay,
> When the hand of beauty beckons
> The wayfarer must away."

3 "In Lyric Season."

4 "At the Voice of a Bird."

5 Cf. Browning's "Two Camels," and lines in Carman's "A Creature Catechism":

> "To-morrow can only fulfil
> Dreams that to-day (the day of Spring's arrival) have birth."

Through leagues of bloom I went with Spring
To call you on the slopes of morn,
Where in imperious song is borne
The wild heart of the goldenwing.

I roamed through alien summer lands,
I sought your beauty near and far,
To-day where russet shadows are
I hold your face between my hands.

On the larger scale, however, the quest of the poet is not—at the first at least—such a joyous one. His ideal of beauty is incarnated in the form of a woman he has *known*,[1] and she has passed over into "the country over the hill." No doubt, "somewhere, somehow," as he says in one of his later poems,

"Time will ope
And the loneliness be sated
And the longing be abated
In the loved one,"

but meanwhile the way is long that leads to the land of his dream, and oft-times, as is apparent in such poems as "Wanderer," he is full weary of foot. At such moments, Nature plucks, as it were, the heavy hearted pilgrim by the sleeve and bids him share the glad confidence and unhaste of her lesser children. "Hear the word of the trees and grasses," she seems to whisper, "all is well."

"I am thy spirit and thy familiar
Child of the teeming earth's unrest!

[1] In "When the Guelder Roses Bloom," the poet is distracted by the knowledge that his craving for beauty can never be satisfied in this world. His ideal has passed into the Great Beyond and the cry of his senses seems to him futile.

"Thou, poor love, thou hast gone mad
With the hardships thou hast had,
True, it is the spring of year
But thy mother is not here."

See also "The Deserted Inn" (Behind the Arras).

Before God's joy upon gloom begot thee
I had hungered and searched and ended the quest."[1]

It is no stoicism, however, that Nature preaches to the poet. She not only bids him still the unrest of his heart but urges him to enjoy the world of beauty around him.

. . . . O wanderer, cease from desiring,
Take the wide province of seaway and sun!
Here for the infinite quench of thy craving
Infinite yearning and bliss are one.

Nay further—and this of high importance—she invites him to vent his dreams in shapes of beauty,[2] bidding him remember that

[1] Nature, for Carman, is a manifestation of spirit seeking to regain its own perfection. God lurks as potency in all things.

". . . . deep in the primal substance
With power and purpose and poise,—
An order under the chaos,
A music beneath the noise,—

The urge of a secret patience
Throbbed into rhythm and form,
Till instinct attained to vision
And the sentient clay grew warm."
(The Measure of Man.)

"Teeming with God, the kindly sod,
Yearns through the summer days. . . ."
(St. Michael's Star.)

It is, however, the obedience of all natural things to the promptings of this purposeful energy that would seem to have inspired the poem. The poet is depressed and sad because he has strayed too far from the *modus vivendi* of Nature. Cf. the words of Emerson:

"We cannot bandy words with Nature. . . . If we measure our individual forces against hers, we may easily feel as if we were the sport of an insuperable destiny. But if . . . . we feel the soul of the workman streams through us, we shall find the peace of the morning dwelling first in our hearts." (Nature.) "Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which animates all whom it floats and you are without effort impelled to truth, to right, and to a perfect contentment." (Spiritual laws.) Carman would hardly agree to the "without effort." See the end of the chapter.

[2] Compare the lines,

"Let loose the conquering toiler within thee;
Know the large rapture of deeds begun!

"The joy of the hand that hews for beauty
Is the dearest solace under the sun."

The last four of five volumes of the volume show that these counsels have not been given in vain. The poet finds peace in the companionship of his lesser kin of forest and meadow; he lives with them and almost, if the word could be used, feels like them. He too gives free vent to "the urge of the great world's desire"[1] for beauty and, hand in hand, with Nature sets forth joyously and confidently for the far Mecca of the cosoms.

I would wander all the hills
Where my fellow-vagrants wend,
Following the trail of shadows
To the country where they end.

Autumn, if it does not bring him satisfaction of his cravings, at least inspires him with confidence that such satisfaction will one day be his. "Courage, O divine vagabond," seem to say the maples in their brave reds and scarlets, "already the turn of the road is here, the banners of the Delectable City are in sight. Am I not to thee the symbol of triumph? Do not lassitude and doubt and cynicism flee before me?" All the Autumn lyrics

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"The joy of the hand that hews for beauty
Is the dearest solace under the sun."

with,

"The purest satisfaction in life lies in bringing our best dreams to pass,—in giving useful form and timely existence to what we have imagined of good and fair." (The Making of Personality, page 288.)

[1] "Seven Things":

Last and best, the urge
Of the great world's desire,
Whose being from core to verge
Only attains to aspire.

(The rhyme "urge"—"verge" is unpardonable; it is repeated in "Veni Creator,"—The Green Book of the Bards.)

breathe confidence in the ultimate realization of his desires.[1]

From what has been already said, it will be evident that our contention that Carman is at one with Nature in these lyrics is not wholly wide of the truth. The poet is—and this will become clearer still after we have examined the art of the poems—"a reed within the river" of natural life. In a normal condition, he is happy even as the birds and animals are happy, content with the free life of nature, and having supreme confidence in the spirit of goodness that would seem to permeate the world of green. He is depressed, it is true, by the dark skies of winter; but it is only when sorrow obtrudes into his life that the poise of his personality is disturbed. To follow, with the inspiration of spring for guide, the trail of beauty,—there is the sole desire of his heart. Unless we are very much mistaken, he has described himself under the symbolism of "A Windflower." The last two stanzas of the lyric depict (it seems to us) his state of mind after the passing of his beloved. Read in the light of this and of our preceding remarks, the poem is certainly less empty than some critics would appear to believe.

"Between the roadside and the road,
Between the dawning and the dew,
A tiny flower before the sun,
Ephemeral in time I grew.

And there upon the trail of spring,
Not death nor love nor any name
Known among men in all their lands
Could blur the wild desire with shame.[2]

---

1 "I shall not fail, for I am strong,
And Time is very old, they say,
And somewhere by the quiet sea
Makes no refusal to delay."
(The End of the Trail.)

". . . . I dream
Of dreams fulfilled and rest somewhere
Before this restless heart is stilled
And all its fancies blown to air."
(The Vagabonds.)

2 The desire for beauty.

But down my dayspan of the year
The feet of straying winds came by;
And all my trembling soul was thrilled
To follow one lost mountain cry.

And then my heart beat once and broke
To hear the sweeping rain forbode
Some ruin in the April world,[1]
Between the woodside and the road.

To-night can bring no healing now
The calm of yesternight is gone;
Surely the wind is but the wind,
And I a broken waif thereon."

These lyrics of "Low Tide" are important in any study of Carman's poetry as indicating the experiences upon which the poet's philosophy is based. In common with all natural things, we have seen, Carman feels intensely the "call" of Spring. Something stirs within him and fills his breast with a passion for beauty, and it is only by satisfying the cravings of this "something" that happiness for him is possible. When the Word goes forth and all Nature resumes her "unfulfilled tasks of perfection, he can be no laggard: he too must seek to actualize his ideals and take his share in bringing fresh beauty to birth. Now, to name this "something" which urges the poet thus to give body to his ideals,[2] "soul:" and to interpret existence as an evolution of beauty due to the divine energy of love;[3] is to do little more than to translate his experiences into

[1] The rain may have suggested the impermanence of mortal bliss. Cf., "In the Spring who does not think of the things that are never to return,—the handclasps of lovers, the conversations of our friends. . . . The oblivion of the April rain has borne them all away. . . ."
(Rhythm.)

[2] "When the spirit in you cries
To be given form and guise
Others may perceive and love. . . ."
(The Pipes of Pan.)

[3] "Love is the tide; God the eternal sea."
(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

terms of metaphysics. This step we believe the poet himself takes in "Behind the Arras." I have felt and I have believed,—there would seem to be the basis of his faith. The following passage from his prose work, "The Kinship of Nature," is significant:—

"At Easter we celebrate the immortal fancy of an imperishable life. It is a season of rapture, of lyric belief in more than human possibility, the day on which the timorous soul is summoned to put trust in the frailest probability, yet with the stoutest, most stubborn faith. Laying aside doubt and the prosy mind, the soul now and again asserts her right to an hour of pure idealism where the solid and safe of actuality can have no part. She insists that conviction is enough, that proof is not necessary, that her beloved dream must come true, because she has dreamed it so often and so hard.

And the essence of religion is the emotion, not the thought—the sure and certain conviction, not the logical conclusion."

Like his friend, Richard Hovey, the poet feels in Spring,—or to speak more precisely, feels most intensely in Spring,—"the pulse that yearns and goads," and that feeling is the true foundation of his belief.

. . . . . .

"Behind the Arras has been well described as a "restless" book. The poet has left the green world of Nature for the gray world of men, and the ancient harpies of civilization, fear, doubt, and despondency have already fixed their loathly claws in his soul. In the city,

> "With God's world all shut out
> Save the leaden frown
> Of the sky, a slant of rain,
> And a straggling star" . . . .
> (The Lodger.)

he is like a wild bird in a cage; a cage, be it said, not even gilded with the gold of material prosperity. The streets, the noise, the frenzied ambition and the pitiless greed of hustling

America, all jar upon his sensitive temperament. Moreover, as an enthusiast who would "house with beauty or with none," he is none too well equipped to meet the necessary obligations of a so-called civilized life. Among men whom, with perhaps a touch of pardonable spleen, he describes as

> ". . . . beings with hair
> And moving eyes in the face,
> And white bone teeth and hideous grins, who race
> From place to place" . . . .
>
> (Behind the Arras.)

his wares, priceless though they may be, are but poor coin wherewith to purchase the loaves and fishes. Small wonder that his confidence should flinch at times and the weary cry, "I am too sick at heart to war with failure any more," escapes his lips. That this loss of confidence is due in part to purely physical causes, seems more than possible. There is a distinct suggestion of nervous exhaustion in the way in which fear,[1] and more particularly fear of death, obtrudes in the poems. The poet is weary and would fain pass beyond "the grime and pestilence of time, did not the ghastly vision of the grim janitor of eternity strike terror into his heart. He has also his 'white nights' when

> The crouching heart within me quails like a shuddering thing,
> As I turn on my pillow to the door;
> Then in the chill white dawn, when life is half-withdrawn,
> Comes the dream-curdling 'Wolf!' at my door."
>
> (The Red Wolf.)

Of the fine poetry, and there is much of it, that this perturbed mental state has given birth to, we need say little here; suffice it to point out that, in order to regain his poise of mind, the poet broods over the old problems of existence. He endeavours to prove to himself that the hereafter will be well. Such metaphysical inquisitions find expression in the poems,

[1] The emotion is nowhere noticeable in the other books.

"Behind the Arras" and "Beyond the Gamut." In the former of these poems we have the poet obsessed by the mystery of change. He has retired within himself, as it were, and, with the eyes of his soul, endeavours to glean some hint of what ghost, beneficent or otherwise, lurks behind the arras of form in the haunted house of life. The enigma must be solved somehow; once shuddering man becomes conscious of the ravages of the "time-spirit," there is no escape from that. Where does the poet find his solution? In philosophical reasoning? In the conventions of dogma? No, simply in the recollection of a vernal experience.

> "Passing the door where an old wind-harp swings,
> With its five strings
> Contrived long years ago
> By my first predecessor bent to show
> His handicraft so, . . .
>
> He plays, like some dread veiled mysteriarch
> Lighting the dark,
> Bidding the spring grow warm,
> The gendering merge and loosing of spirit in form,
> Peace out of storm."

It is enough. The poet need guess no more at the name or purpose of the ghost behind the arras. In the realms of Nature, he knows that his patient fellows find happiness in venting their spring-born aspirations, and he perceives that the lovely forms of the outer world are the result. Whatever spirit, then, be working in all things and through all things, its aims are beneficent. There is nothing to fear.

Love is the Lord of Life, for love is "the word" of spring and reveals to all, in proportion to their several necessities, a glimpse of the cosmic ideal,—the white and ever-alluring beauty of the incarnate God. Once a life is fully conscious of that "pulse which yearns and goads," doubt, fear, and failure cease to trouble. They are lost in the awakened vision. The fair

dream must come true. "Desire shall steer us home from far." As stated thus, all this is little more than "Low Tide" over again. In the poem, however, the poet expresses these ideas in a way which would seem to indicate that he has not only recalled his vernal experiences in the world of Nature but has analysed them also. He is conscious that it was through his "prison house of sense"[1] that the God in Nature spoke to his eager and responsive heart, and, knowing sense to be but power of perceiving rhythm, conceives the "Overword" or Deity as a kind of master-musician who imparts Himself to the "soul" of his creations in playing upon their "harps woven of flesh." This conception is developed in "Beyond the Gamut." Nature, the poet thinks in this poem, is but the lovely metaphor, as it were, of some incompleted harmony of the Deity, and it is only by means of our senses, and in proportion as our senses are perfect, that we become conscious of this harmony and fired with the ambition to take our share in completing it. We must "touch environment with every sense-tip," to use his own words, if we would quicken that spirit which lurks in ourselves, and which, as Emerson says, "seems to come forth from every dry knoll of sere grass, from every pine-stump and half-imbedded stem, on which the dull March sun shines. Carman arrives thus at another principle of his philosophy: the sublime vision comes only to the eager and responsive heart in a wholesome and sensitive body. "Not even a God can play upon a checked and broken reed." We quote a few verses from "Beyond the Gamut" to show the trend of the poet's thought.

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[1] "Behind the Arras":

"If with such agonies of bliss, my kin,
I enter in
Your prison-house of sense,
With what a joyous freed intelligence
I shall go hence."

(Cf. "From the body and from its instincts she (the soul) draws a first hint of the right means to the accepted purposes." Quoted by Carman from Mr. George Santayana in "The Making of Personality."

"As all sight is but a finer hearing,
And all color but a finer sound,
Beauty, but the reach of lyric freedom,
Caught and quivering past all music's bound;
Life, that faint sigh whispered from oblivion,
Harks and wonders if we may not be
Five small wits to carry one great rhythmus,
The vast theme of God's new symphony.

. . . . . .

Earth one habitat of spirit merely,[1]
I must use as richly as I may,—
Touch environment with every sense-tip,
Drink the well and pass my wander-way.

Ah, drink deep and let the parching morrow
Quench what thirst its newer need may bring!
Slake the senses now, that soul hereafter
Go not forth a starved defrauded thing.

. . . . . .

Certain half-men, never touched by worship,
Soil the goodly feast they cannot use;
Others, mained too, holding flesh a hindrance,
Vilify the bounty they refuse.

Throughout all his work the poet is quite definite on the point emphasized in these lines, namely, the interdependence of the physical and the spiritual powers of man. "The phyical side of personality," he says in his latest volume of essays, is the only soil and substance through which the spiritual and intellectual life are reinforced. . . . . We are not wholly animal, it is true, but we are fundamentally so; and our spiritual strain which we so cherish and seek to cultivate can

[1] The same idea may be found in the poetry of R. Browning. "It is the sense of onward movement, the outlook towards an immortal course, 'the life after life in unlimited series' which is so inspiring in his (Browning's) early poetry. He conceives that we are here on this lower earth, just to learn one form, the elementary lesson and alphabet of goodness, namely, 'the uses of the flesh;' in other lives, other achievements." ("Browning," Henry Jones.)

never be made to grow away from its physical base and source. . . . . There can be no saving the soul alive, either for men or nations, if the body be allowed to sicken in ignorance or neglect.

Still, if the poet regard the physical as the substance in which the soul is begotten and as the medium through which it is quickened into sentient life, he treats nevertheless this soul as a distinct, although not separate entity. It is, he would seem to think, with Robert Browning, who has exercised a great influence upon his thought, a drop from the boundless sea of God's being, the embryonic divine which lurks in all things, and, which, once quickened by love, endeavours to realize its own potentiality. How may this potentiality be realized? The poet has but one answer: the soul must perform its natural function of moulding actuality nearer to its ideals. "The one strand of revelation which runs through all history of nature and man is surely this—a constant embodying of thoughts in actions, a constant attempt to crown longing with fulfilment, a continuous and unflagging effort to bring about the realization of ideals." In "Beyond the Gamut" we have the lines:—

> Test and use of all things, lowest, highest,
> Are alone of import to the soul,[1]
> Joys of earth are journey-aids to heaven,
> Garb of the new saint-hood sane and whole.

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[1] Compare:

> ". . . . Behold we arise*
> From failure, mistake, and regret, putting on the fresh guise
> Of a use no disaster can ruin, the ultimate test
> When endeavour shall gain all it dreamed of the infinite best,—
> *The little-regarded and common made great and sublime,*
> The eternal arrested and fashioned in space and in time.
> (Memorial Day.)

The thought is somewhat Emersonian: "Proceeding from a religious heart, it (art) will raise to a divine use the railroad, the insurance office, the joint-stock company, our law, our primary assemblies, our commerce, the galvanic battery, the electric jar, the prison, and the chemist's retort, in which we seek now only an economical use." (Art—Emerson's Essays.)

What the latter half of this passage means, let the poet himself explain.

"Just as the only test for the virtue of salt is its savour, so the only test for the virtue of the heart is its joy. . . . . Happiness comes to us not as a reward of merit, but as a proof of worth. It is not a recompense for abnegation, but a natural satisfaction in normal life. It is not to be found in violation of fundamental laws, for the simple reason that those laws, so far from being arbitrary restrictions imposed upon the human spirit, are merely the inherent laws of its own development and growth." The soul is joyous in bringing its dreams to pass for, in so doing, it is merely performing its natural function.[1]

In common with Emerson and other transcendalists, the poet regards the soul as worthy of implicit trust. He also would walk by "the inward light." There can be no doubt whatever on this point; everywhere he lays the greatest stress upon the necessity for giving heed the admonition of the soul and for acting in accordance with its dictates.

> "What we best may dare and drudge and learn,
> Let soul discern."
>
> (Behind the Arras).

How, then, can one explain this line?

> "Evil is the soul's misuse of means."
>
> (Beyond the Gamut).

Surely, one cannot trust a fallible guide. The explanation is simple enough when one remembers that it is not only the perception of the good and the beautiful but the translation of these into fact also, that the poet considers of importance. It is our joyous duty to actualize the ideals of the soul, but these ideals are not all equally good here and now. There is the

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[1] This is but a philosophical interpretation of

> "The joy of the hand that hews for beauty
> Is the dearest solace under the sun."

already existent reality to be considered.[1] "The soul," to quote from the poet's essays, "is guileless and unsuspecting, and seems to be native to a land that knows no sorrow nor evil, and to be experienced only in an eternity of truth and beauty and goodness . . . . " If our interpretation of the passage be correct, the poet is obviously near to a future development of his philosophy, namely, a recognition of the necessity for reason. This recognition he acknowledges later, thus: "Whatever course the untutored will wishes to venture upon needs to be examined, adjudged, and steered by the understanding. Reason deals with our affairs in a strictly practical fashion. It ruthlessly reviews our dreamful purposes and ideals with regard to their possibility or practicability of accomplishment in this very real world. . . . In resigning thus our too exclusive occupation with dreams, we are not recreant to any lofty obligation, we are in fact progressing upon the pathway of perfection. We are merely discriminating among our ideals, discarding the less useful, in order that the more valuable may be cultivated and realized." A very little experience of the world of men must have demonstrated to the poet that one may be actuated by the purest of motives and yet cause disaster to one's self and others.

The task of the soul in bringing the actual nearer to the preconceived ideal of God, does not, the poet would seem to believe with Browning, 'pause for breath.' This life over, the soul returns with its acquired experience to the vast sea of cosmic being from whence it came,

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[1] "If a loyalty to the intimations of spirit is so large a part of wisdom, a loyalty to fact is needed, too, a loyalty to those past ideas we have made permanent. . . . To the over-strenuous idealist must be said: 'Hold hard to fact. . . . Never stray too far from the physical phase of existence, lest you wander and be lost for ever' . . . .

It will avail you nothing to stand face to face with the vision, if you cannot in some way make actual and apparent to men the beauty you have beheld. Let aspiration be as ethereal as you will, the spirit of beauty must be made manifest to be fully enjoyed."

(The Kinship of Nature.)

"To be through thousand springs restored, renewed,
With love imbued,
With increments of will
Made strong, perceiving unattainment still
From each new skill.

It must not be inferred from the fore-going attempt to treat synthetically the philosophical reflections scattered through out the poems of "Behind the Arras" that, at the time these poems were written,—although it is evident soon after,—the thought of the poet had already crystalized into a system. Such an inference would be unjustifiable. All one can say with safety is that, after much mental anguish, the poet has arrived at the three great principles of his later philosophy: that love is the Lord of Life, the revealer of the purpose of creation; that this divine energy can only be transmitted to the soul through the media of the senses and in proportion as the senses are perfect; that the ideals awakened in the soul by love can only be adequately realized with the help of reason. These three principles are, however, nowhere co-ordinated in the poems; amid the blackness of doubt and dejection it is only glimpses of his Star of Bethlehem that the poet perceives. Still, with the poet's realization of the cause of his unhappiness,—that he had been living too far from the free life of nature,[1]—co-ordination

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1 "Give me freedom, give me space
Give me open air and sky,
With the clean wind in my face
Where the quiet mountains lie.
. . . . . .
I am sick of roofs and floors,
Naught will heal me but to roam;
Open me the forest doors,
Let the green world take me home.

I am sick of streets and noise,
Narrow ways and cramping creeds;
Give me back the simpler joys;
Nothing else my spirit needs.

Give me three days solitude,
Sea or hill or open plain,

of these principles, with a view to effecting a remedy through their practical application, was not very long delayed.[1] He soon perceived that although the life in the open might be at times beyond his reach, he could nevertheless during such unfortunate periods effect a working compromise between it and the cramping life of the city:—he could maintain through culture a healthy and sensitive body; he could keep an eager and loving soul; and he could train his mind so that the actualization of his ideals might not lead him into irretrievable disaster. "Man," he saw, to use his own words, "is a creature with three pronounced phases of being: the physical, the mental, and the emotional or spiritual. And yet so inseparable are these three natures, so bound and knit together in all their requirements, functions, and satisfactions, that they form not merely a triple alliance, but a true trinity. To neglect one is to injure all."

Before dealing with the development of this "unitrinian" conception of human nature and human need, we would briefly indicate the reasons that induced us to trace its gradual evolution in the early work of the poet. In the first instance, we wished to show what functions Carman assigned to each of the three different, although interdependent powers of man. To state his theory crudely, "ethical culture, mental culture, physical culture, each is excellent and all are necessary, but no one of them will suffice, indeed no two of them can satisfy without the third," would be perilously near enunciating a commonplace, and one which would cast but little light upon the thought of his poems. Secondly, we wished to make it clear that the philosophy of

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And with all the earth renewed,
I grow strong and glad and sane."
(A Song of the Open.)

"Holiday" is a variation on the same theme. In the absence of a complete bibliography of Carman's works, one cannot assign an exact date to these poems. They would appear, however, by their tone to have been written contemporaneously with, or immediately after, the poems of "Behind the Arras."

[1] See the concluding stanzas of "Christmas Eve at St. Kavin's" ("The Word at St. Kavin's") 1901.

Carman is fundamentally a "nature" philosophy,—an attempt to bring the life of man more into line with the life of Nature. And lastly, we wished to show that, whatever its value, this philosophy is in its essentials the poet's own, built out of long years of questing thought and experience, and tested and found true in its practical application. There can be not the slightest doubt that Carman's philosophy has lighted for him the path to happiness; and that to it, largely if not solely, is due the optimistic tone that pervades the greater part of his verse.[1]

The doctrines of Carman, the development of which we have just traced, early assimilated to themselves,—probably under the influence of the thought of Robert Browning,—a modern interpretation of the evolutional theory:

"The continuity of existence which the doctrine of evolution postulates," remarks Professor Henry Jones, "may be interpreted in two very different ways. We may take as the principle of explanation either the beginning or the end of the process of development. We may say of the simple and the crass, 'There is all your rich universe really means;' or we may of the spiritual activities of man, 'This is what your crude beginning really was.' . . . We may analyse the highest back into the lowest, or we may follow the lowest, by a process of synthesis back into the highest. . . . Nature explains by gradually expanding. If we hearken to nature, we shall hear her explain at the last stage, 'Here is the meaning of the seedling. Now it is clear what it really was; the power which lay dormant has pushed itself into light, through bud and flower and leaf and fruit.' The reality of a living thing is its highest form of being. The last explains the first, but not the first the last. The first is abstract, incomplete, not yet actual but mere potency, except in the light of its own actualization.

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[1] We found when going over the criticisms of Carman's poetry that one writer thought the poet's optimism to be "a facile thing attained by turning away from the real problems of life." We would, therefore, emphasize the point mentioned in the text.

From this view of development momentous consequences follow. If the universe is, as science pronounces, an organic totality, which is ever converting its promise and potency into actuality, then we must add that the ultimate interpretation even of the lowest existence in the world cannot be given except on principles which are adequate to explain the highest. . . . We must not only deny that matter can explain spirit, but we must say that even matter itself cannot be understood, except as an element in a spiritual world. . . . If the continuity of existence were irrefragably proved, science would not overthrow idealism; it would rather vindicate it. It would justify in detail the attempt of poetry and religion and philosophy to interpret all being as the "transparent vesture of reason, or love, or whatever power in the world is regarded as highest."

The interpretation of evolution set forth in the above lines is, it is almost unnecessary to state, the one adopted by Carman. Everywhere in nature, he sees the power of love, "infusing being, helping sense and soul." Inspired by this divine energy,

> " . . . . Soul has led us now
> Science unravels how,
> Through cell and tissue up from dust to man;
> And will lead us by and by,
> No logic tells us why,
> To fill her purport in the larger plan."
>
> (The Word at St. Kavin's).

It is, however, the manner in which this evolution is accomplished, rather than the evolution itself, that interests the poet. Turning to nature, he perceives in the first instance that it is brought about by a sturdy individualism. To each form of life is given its own ideal and the will to follow it, and it is only by actualizing that ideal that growth is possible. "Behold the the fir-trees," he says, "how unswerved they are!"

> "Native to sun and storm,
> They cringe not nor conform,
> Save to the gentle law their sound heart knows."
>
> (The Word at St. Kavin's).

In the second place, he sees that this actualization of ideals is accomplished patiently, calmly, and without haste.

"Ah, the patience of earth! Look down at the dark pointed firs;
They are carved out of darkness; one pattern recurs and recurs.
They crowd all the gullies and hillsides, the gashes and spurs,
As silent as death. What an image! How nature avers
The goodness of calm with that taciturn beauty of hers!
As silent as sleep. Yet the life in them climbs and upstirs.
They too have received the great law, know that haste but defers
The perfection of time,—the initiate gospeller firs."
(Above the Gasperean.)

In the third place, he finds that evolution, as exemplified in the sub-human world, takes place without cruelty or greed. "The beasts that live by killing, kill only as hunger bids. . . . There is no wanton destruction except among those primitive voters, our arboreal ancestors, the apes."[1] How about our own life? Is our modern manner of living in accordance with the *modus vivendi* which enabled us to ascend from "dust to man?" Carman thinks not. We have replaced the sanctions of the loving soul by the sanctions of custom and conventionality, bowing to "vested wrong" and "pawning our birthright for a tinsel star." "We have developed new desires, absurd and unthought-of requirements, that can only be satisfied, as they increase, by ever-increasing stores of wealth wrung from the earth. Nor is this enough; we are not satisfied with what we can earn by labour; we must plunder from our weaker fellows, outwitting them in relentless guile." We starve our own souls in our mad haste to acquire wealth, and we starve the souls of our less fortunate neighbours by allowing them no opportunity to realize their ideals.[2] Everywhere the artist in man is stunted

1 "The Courtesy of Nature." (The Kinship of Nature.)

2 "Now, with the body made a slave to machinery, and the spirit defrauded of any scope for its pent-up force, we have nothing to hope for in the industrial world, and the breach between art and life will go on widening until labour is utterly brutalized and art utterly emasculated."
(The Kinship of Nature.)

and stifled: "houses, servants, tailors, teas,—a thousand cares and annoyances press upon the rich and crush them back into the fat clay from which they came;"[1] while the poor, "with the body made a slave to machinery, and the spirit defrauded of any scope for its pent-up force," are in even a worse plight.

"There is no man alive,
  However we may strive,
Allowed to own the work of his own hands.
  Landlords and waterlords
  At all the roads and fords,
Taking their toll, imposing their commands.

  Not until every man
  Is free to choose and plan
What service he will do for beauty's sake,—
  How vent that one supreme
  Desire, the artist's dream,
Bidding new wonders at his touch awake,—

  Not until he is made
  The lord of his own trade,
Can any man be glad, or strong, or free,
  There looms the coming war.
  What captain are you for,
The chartered wrong, or Christ and liberty?"

(Lincoln.)

Compare,

"There might be more freedom in England though her feudal lords' lightest were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line."

(Ruskin. The Nature of Gothic.)

[1] Therefore it is that the poet sings:—

"Thank God for poverty
  That makes and keeps us free,
That lets us go our unobtrusive way,
  Glad of the sun and rain,
  Upright, serene, humane,
Contented with the fortune of a day.

. . . . . .

  All selfish gain at best
  Brings but profound unrest
And inward loss, despite our loud professions.
  Think therefore what it is,
  What surety of bliss,
To be absolved from burdensome possessions!"

(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

The result is that we suffer a life without joy and are in serious peril of going backwards instead of forwards in the realms of being.

Where is the remedy? Carman is convinced that it is to be found in living closer to the old life of earth. He looks at the calm, patient fir-trees and exclaims:

Ah, what a travesty
Of man's ascent, were I
  To bear myself less royally than they,
After the ages spent
In spirit's betterment,
  Through rounds of aspiration and decay.
. . . . . .
Therefore, my friends, I say,
Back to the fair sweet way
  Our mother Nature taught us long ago,—
The large primeval mood,
Leisure and amplitude,
  The dignity of patience strong and slow.

Let us go in once more,
By some blue mountain door,
  And hold communion with the forest leaves,
Where long ago we trod
The Ghost House of the God,
  Through orange dawns and amethystine eaves.
. . . . . .
In that diviner air
We shall grow wise and fair,

"It is not good for you," he says to the artist, "to live richly in cities, because it is hard to deny yourself. You must first be poor and lonely and dejected; then you must think of the luxury of your freedom; so you will enter into possession of yourself; and you will be glad and free and creative and strong. There is no other gladness; there is no other freedom; there is no other greatness."

(The Kinship of Nature.)

Not frayed by hurry nor distraught by noise,
Learn once again to be
Noble, courageous, free,—
Regain our primal ecstacy and poise.
(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

"True," the poet remarks, "we cannot at once incontinently leave our tasks and wander at will into the green world whenever the wind sets from a pleasant quarter; but for all that, there are many steps that we may take towards re-establishing our divine heritage and rightful portion in the delectable commonwealth of out-of-doors."

"Since we no longer live under the rigorous necessities which produced and determined our physical powers, in the course of evolution, it is not to be expected that those powers can be retained unimpaired without wise and deliberate fostering. Our physical development needs our most intelligent care and determined cultivation." Such culture has, however, the inward, living, controlling force of personality to reckon with. "Man's body is the product of evolution, indeed, but that evolution includes also the growth of his spirit and intelligence, which find their only manifestation through his physical being. . . . We not only transform our outward bodily persons by what we are, but in sober truth our most essential selves are in their turn reflexly transformed by the re-acting influence of our physical habits and doings. If a crabbed and malign soul makes its inevitable appearance in the face, just so truly does the habitual cultivation of a gracious and considerate demeanour tend inevitably to eradicate those unhappy conditions of spirit. . . .[1] Physical culture, mental culture, moral culture, each

[1] "If physical training is to have any really educative value, if it is to be an integral part of a humane culture, it cannot rest satisfied with developing strength, endurance and skill, delightful and goodly as these qualities are; it must be civilizing in its tendency, and help to eliminate violent impulses, minimizing and obliterating all that is savage and ferocious in our animal nature, and retaining and developing all that is wholesome and needful. . . . . There is not the least doubt that physical education

then must go hand in hand with the others; to neglect one is to injure all.

"It was natural that in the beginnings of self-consciousness, sustenance and the satisfying of bodily needs should seem the only necessity. It was natural, too, that as man became aware of the pleasures of the mind, other needs should seem to him more worthy than those of the body. Just as naturally will spread the glad realization of the newer, larger ideal of perfect manhood, which gives free play to each normal instinct, and allows an equal culture for the three natures so strangely brought to focus in the clay-built structure we inhabit.

Nay, more than that, it will be revealed to us, gradually and like a joyous gospel, that in following this new standard of normal culture, we are not only giving vent to the varying and seemingly opposed powers we possess, but the cultivation of one implies the growth of all. We shall see how essential health is, not only to happiness, but to righteousness and clear thinking also,—how every service rendered this perishable tenement makes for clarity of mind and sweetness of temper,—and how we can never foster one faculty without bettering our whole being, nor ever approach entire excellence while any need, whether of mind or body or spirit, remains ruthlessly neglected.

To such a code the intellectual life alone can never seem of paramount importance; but the discovery of truth must be

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can render great help in doing this. In bodily training, as in all other realms of life, it is practice that forms habit and habit that forms character. The calling of the fireman or the coast guard must educe and stimulate the humaner instincts, sympathy, generosity, kindliness, unselfishness, tenderness; while it also requires no less courage and endurance than the brutalizing art of war. As a vocation thus exerts so potent an influence in the formation of character, even so must bodily training exert a definite modifying guidance. . . . The student of acting cannot practise the expressing of anger, despair, revenge, or love, without exciting those passions in his heart. So inseparably allied are spirit and sense, so interdependent are their aims, interests, and their spheres."

(The Making of Personality).

followed by actual accomplishment.[1] Nor will accomplishment suffice without grace. . . . These passing days are a tissue of appearances to be woven into patterns of ugliness or beauty between our hands. No time is too precious to spend, no detail too small to be considered, in bringing the fabric of life as it passes through our fingers, ever nearer and nearer to some preconceived image of beauty." . . . Whatever there is of beauty in the world must have been imagined before it was wrought; whatever there is of truth must have been postulated before it was verified; whatever there is of good must have been desired before it was brought about. And whatever there is to be of these things in the future for the benefit of men can only come to pass in the same way, by being imagined first and then made actual.

> All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist,
> Not its semblance, but itself,

says Browning; and we are not properly men and women until we give ourselves without reserve to the furthering of that great cosmic scheme, adding our energies to the energy of the universe, in helping beauty to be born, and knowledge to appear and

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[1] "For the unitrinian, truth is hardly truth unless it has soul and body, unless it partakes of spirituality on the one hand and reality on the other. There are greater things than the conception and truth divorced from good and beauty; there is nothing greater than the truth that is allied to its spiritual origin and its physical fulfilment; for that utmost larger truth is nothing less than the universal thought, the Logos, which must necessarily include not only infinite knowledge, but imperishable beauty and inexhaustible goodness in its triúne perfection,—just as all our partial knowledge is allied to sensation and emotion,—all fleeting and imperfect, yet for ever inseparable. Truth is the second person of a sacred trinity; wherever voluntary good awakes and sensible loveliness is found, there is truth between them, and there only. How monstrous and blind would all the arts and activities of men become without the beneficient impulses of the soul, and the clear guidance of knowledge and season! How sterile were the researches of science, with no attachment to the needs and purposes of life! How blight and vain those religious exaltations which shut themselves away from the light of science, denying the ministrations of beauty and the sanctity of nature! All these are broken and false ideals of art, of science, of religion."

(Address at Moonshine).

the longing spirit to find happiness and satisfaction in creative activity and growth."

These ideas which, although culled from different essays and even volumes, we have given in the poet's own words, are to be found everywhere in the later poems, and an acquaintance with them is essential if these are to be rightfully appreciated. Their first and most definite expression is in "The Word at St. Kavin's," the evolutional poem we have already quoted from.

Be body, mind, and soul,
Subject to love's control,
  Each loving to the limit of love's power;
And all as one, not three,
So is man's trinity
Enhanced and feed and gladdened hour by hour.

Beauty from age to age,
The body's heritage,
  Love will not forfeit by neglect nor shame;
And knowledge dearly bought,
Love will account as nought,
  Unless it serves soul's need and body's claim.[1]

Let soul desire, mind ask,
And body crave; our task
  Be to fulfil each want in love's own way.

[1] When it comes to having to choose between the findings of reason and those of the moral consciousness (soul), Carman does not hesitate to reject the former. Here is his advice to "One in Despair":—

"Live on, live on! Let reason swerve;
  But instinct knows her own great lore,
Like some uncharted planet's curve
  That sweeps in sight then is no more.

Live on, love on, without a qualm,
  Child of immortal charity,
In the great certitude and calm
  Of joy freeborn that shall not die."

So shall the good and true
Partake of beauty too,
And life be helped and greatened day by day.

With the influence of Carman's unitrinian philosophy upon his art, we shall deal in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARTISTIC THEORIES OF THE POET.

IN dealing with the evolution of Carman's thought, we remarked that much of the poet's later work is more or less expository of a definite philosophical system. There seems to us three reasons for this. In the first place, that system has undoubtedly been the means of bringing great personal happiness to the poet and, with all the enthusiasm of the genuine lover of humanity, he would lead others into the dominion of his joy. In the second place, Carman is of New England extraction, and one of the more prominent characteristics of New England writers has always been their seriousness of purpose, the poets generally speaking looking upon themselves not merely as singers of sweet song but as something in the nature of prophets and teachers also. For such writers as Emerson and Lowell what they had to say was almost as important as the manner in which they said it, and the inculcation of sound morality of as much importance as the creation of beauty.[1] An instinctive passion for race

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[1] Carman notes this fact in his essay on Longfellow.

"Longfellow was not merely nor even primarily an artist in words. He was a man of deep and serious convictions and feelings, beholding the varied pageant of life, and desirous of giving utterance to his thoughts about it. That he should have been able to give his thoughts a finished and beautiful verbal form, was a subsidiary gift. He was an artist to the tips of his fingers, as has been said of him, but he was first a poet*—since there is no other term to use. It is impossible to read a page of Longfellow without feeling this moral force. It is not only evident in his obviously spiritual poems, like "The Psalm of Life," but it is present in all his poems. It is the main theme everywhere. You perceive that the main business of his endeavours is not the creation of a mere illusion, however beautiful, but the revelation of goodness,—the great active pervading goodness of the universe. He is too excellent an artist to be merely didactic, but he is too excellent a poet to be merely artistic. He is no trifler."

culture, and one apparently more or less common to all North American peoples, would seem to underlie this. Listen to Walt Whitman:—

"Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson.
Pioneers! O pioneers!"

In the third place, the introduction of the didactic element is part and parcel of a theory of art which, in its turn, is a direct outcome of the poet's unitrinian philosophy.

"Nature, the beautiful outer world," he says in The Poetry of Life, "is all the Invisible (the World Spirit) found to say before the appearance of man. Art is the slow, insistent endeavour of the same power to utter itself still more coherently, still more intelligently and finally, through the speech of man."[1] In other words, art is the expression of the desire in man to better the life of earth.[2] This conception, Carman has developed at some length in an essay entitled The Purpose of Poetry, the substance of which we shall endeavour to give as far as possible in his own words.

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* "What do you understand by a poet?. . . .
First, and speaking most roughly, he is a person who has something important to say about life and has the special gift of saying it supremely well. . . . . He must also feel deeply and strongly about life."
(The Poetry of Life).

[1] "It is an aspiration towards a new life, the persistent and prescient cry of the soul." "The Poetry of To-morrow." (The Poetry of Life.)

[2] "This alone is art's ambition, to arrest with form and hue
Dominant ungrasped ideals, known to credence, hid from view,
In a mimic of creation,—to the life, yet fairer too,

Where the soul may take her pleasure, contemplate perfection's plan.
And returning brings the tidings of his heritage to man,—
News of continents uncharted she has stood tip-toe to scan.

So she fires his gorgeous fancy with a cadence, with a line,
Till the artist wakes within him, and the toiler grows divine,
Shaping the rough world about him nearer to some fair design."
(Bahaman.)

"The most primitive and necessary occupations we engage in, such as fishing and agriculture, trading, navigating, and hunting, we call industries. These mark the earliest stage of man's career in civilization. Then he comes to other occupations requiring more skill and ingenuity; he weaves fabrics, he makes himself houses, he fashions all sorts of implements for the household and the chase. . . . And these new occupations which he has discovered for himself differ from his earlier ones chiefly in this, that they result in numerous objects of more or less permanence, cunningly contrived and aptly fitted for use. They are the objects of useful or industrial art.

Now we must note two things about this step forward that man has taken towards civilization; in the first place he had to have some leisure to do these things, and in the second place the objects he has made reveal his ingenuity and forethought. They are records of his life; and it will happen that as his leisure increases, his implements will become more and more elaborate and ornate. . . . They will tell us something of the artificer himself; they will embody some intentional expression of human life and come to have an art value. . . . And the more freely the workman can deal with his craft, the more perfectly he can make it characteristic of himself, the finer will its artistic quality become.

Carman, in "The Making of Personality," widens the meaning of Art. "A rational art of life," he says, "is the consummate flowering of human endeavour. . . . An art of living is as it were a generalization of art, and calls into execution, through conduct, those qualities of mind and temper and equipment which every good artist must possess. . . . An artist is anyone who glorifies his occupation."

"Line upon line and tone by tone
The visioned form he gives
To sound and color, wood and stone,
Takes loveliness and lives.
He sees his project's soaring hope
Grow substance, and expand
To measure a diviner scope
Beneath his patient hand."

(St. Michael's Star.)

The only purpose of the primitive industries was a utilitarian one. The prime object of the industrial arts is also a utilitarian one; but they have a secondary object as well, they aim at beauty too. They not only serve the practical end for which they were intended, but they serve also as a means of expression for the workman. Now just as we passed from the primitive industries to the industrial arts by the addition of this secondary interest, this human artistic expressional quality, so by making this quality paramount we may pass from the industrial arts to the fine arts themselves, where expression is all important, and utility becomes less prominent. . . .

Now we may notice that the quality of art begins to appear in all our occupations, as the direst stress of existence is relieved, and man's spirit begins to have free play. Art is an indication of health and happy exuberance of life; it is as instinctive and spontaneous in its origin as child's play. . . . The primitive industries mark the first grade in the human story, when we were barely escaping from the necessity for unremitting hand-to-hand physical struggle for life; and the second grade in our progress is marked by the appearance of the industrial arts; while we may look on the fine arts as an index of the highest development, as we pass from savagery and barbarism to civilization. . . .

The fine arts, having thus had their rise in the free play of the human spirit as it went about its work in the world. . . . became a natural vehicle for giving expression to all man's aspirations and thoughts about life. . . . We may expect to find in them a trustworthy image of himself. Whatever is human must be there,—all our thoughts, all our emotions, all our sensations, hopes and fears. Art is that lovely corporeal body with which man endows the spirit of goodness and the thought of truth. For there are in man these three great principles: a capacity for finding out the truth and distinguishing it from error, a capacity for perceiving goodness and knowing it from evil, and a capacity for discriminating between what is

ugly and what is fair. . . . Yet we must be careful not to suppose that either one of these powers ever comes alone into full play or fruition; for man has not three separate natures, but one nature with three different phases. When, therefore, man finds expression for his complete personality in the fine arts, you may always expect to find there, not only creations of beauty, but monuments of wisdom and religion as well. . . .

Any piece of art which does not fulfil its obligations to truth and goodness, is necessarily faulty and incomplete. . . . For art cannot give us complete pleasure if it only appeals to our senses, and leaves unsatisfied our natural curiosity and wonder,—our need for understanding and our need for loving. That is to say our reason and our emotion must always be appealed to, as well as our sense of beauty. . . . If art and literature are devoted to the service of beauty, no less are they dedicated to the service of truth and goodness. In the phrase which Arnold used to quote, it is their business to make the reason and will of God prevail. So that whilst literature must fulfil the obligations laid upon it to be delightful—quite as scrupulously must it meet our demands for knowledge and satisfy our spiritual needs. To meet the first of these demands, of course, it is not necessary for literature to treat of scientific subjects; it must, however, be enlightened by the soundest philosophy at its command, and informed with all the knowledge of its time. It may not deal directly with the thought of its age, but it must never be at variance with truth.[1] It may often be necessary

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[1] Carman pushes this idea to its logical conclusion. It is the old story of Perrault over again.

"If there is no limit to knowledge, there can be no limit to art, either, since art contains our comment on science, and reflects the growth of our minds."

One has also a practical application:—

"Paradise Lost," for example, can hardly have the same hold on us that it had on our parents. For them it was an impressive rendering of what they believed to be supernatural facts. It must have retained for them something of the glamour and authority of religion. For us it is a twice-told tale, an ancient legend retold in our English tongue, less lovely than many of the Greek myths that have come down to us, conspicuous through the stateliness of its verse, but holding no unquestionable moral sanction, having no such

for literature and art to deal with crime and depravity and moral obliquity; but it must never dwell upon them excessively or unnecessarily, nor even seem to make them prevail. For evil does not rule the world, however powerful it may seem at moments, and in the long run it is overcome by good. And since it is the prime duty of art to make us happy, to give us encouragement and joy, to urge and support our spirits, to ennoble and enrich our lives, surely the one way in which art can be immoral is by leaving us depressed and sad, and uncertain about the final issue between sorrow and gladness. . . ."

Before leaving the essay from which we have already quoted so freely, let us note what Carman believes to be the causes of the present indifference to art.

"It is a sad day for a people when their art becomes divorced from the current of their life, when it comes to be looked on as something precious but unimportant, having nothing at all to do with their social structure, their education, their political ideals, their faith, or their daily vocations. But I fear that we ourselves are living in just such a time. Fine arts may be patronized even liberally, but you could not say that they have any hold on us as a people. . . . One reason for this there is, it seems to me, which is too important not to be referred to. The fine arts are an outgrowth and finer development of the industrial arts. One would expect them to flourish only in a nation where the industrial arts flourish; only in such a nation would the great body of the people be infused with the popular love of beauty, and the feeling for art, which could create a stimulating, artistic atmosphere in which great artists could be born and nourished. Now under modern industrial and commercial conditions, the industrial arts are dead; they have been killed by the exigencies of our business processes. . . . The modern workman is a

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spiritual significance as it may once have possessed. So, too, the vogue of Byron passed with the passing tastes and requirements of his day. Because he satisfied the sentimental need and intellectual hunger of a hundred years ago, it does not follow that he should satisfy ours."

(The Poetry of Life.)

slave to his conditions; he can only earn his bread by working with a maximum of speed and a minimum of conscientiousness. He can have neither pride nor pleasure in his work; and consequently that work can have no artistic value whatever. . . .[1]

It may seem, at a superficial glance, that the arts are all very well as a pastime, for the enjoyment of the few, but can have no imperative call for busy men and women in active modern life. And if we should be told that, as a nation, we have no wide-spread love of beauty, no popular taste in artistic matters, we would not take the accusation very much to heart. . . . (But) our sense of beauty and our sense of goodness are so closely related that any injury to the one means an injury to the other. You cannot expect the nation which cares nothing at all for art to care very much for justice or righteousness. . . . We shall never reach that national position of true greatness, which many Americans have dreamed of, . . . unless we recognize the vital need of moral standards and æsthetic ideals working together hand in hand, and set ourselves to secure them. And if you ask me why America is producing for the most part only that which is mediocre in art and literature, I am forced to reply, that it is because the average man among us has so little respect for moral ideals."

These theories of Carman seem to us radically false. We can neither follow the poet's reasoning nor accept his conclusions. It is not a legitimate deduction from the fact that "art begins to appear as the direst stress of existence is relieved," that "art is an indication of health and happy exuberance of life." A certain amount of leisure is no doubt a necessary condition of both art and health but, surely, that by no means justifies the contention that the appearance of the one indicates the presence of the other. Literary biography, moreover, does not justify Carman's assertion. Again, the poet's definition of art as "that lovely corporeal body with which man endows the spirit of good-

[1] Cf. Ruskin: "The Nature of Gothic."

ness and the thought of truth," and his contention that poetry must give us intellectual and moral pleasure as well as, and coincidentally with, æsthetic pleasure, are difficult to reconcile with his previous statement that "whatever is human must be in art." Why the limitation? Carman's explanations are not convincing. No one of the faculties of man, he says, ever comes alone into full play; for man has not three separate natures but one nature with three phases. When, therefore, man finds expression for his complete personality in the fine arts, one may always expect to find there "not only creations of beauty, but monuments of wisdom and religion as well."—Yes, but one must also expect to find monuments of folly and irreligion, or reject frankly the primary contention that "all our thoughts and emotions must be in art." But, queries the poet, "unless the world of art be in some way more delightful than the world of our everyday experience, why should we ever visit it?" One must reply that the answer to such a question depends entirely upon the point of view of the visitor. As a scientist, for example, one might enter it in quest of psychological data: as a moralist, one might seek admittance with a view to obtaining a knowledge of virtue and vice; as an artist, one would certainly crave entrance to discover fresh beauty—and nothing else. We have more than a suspicion that even the most narrow scientist, or let it be moralist, would find Carman's world of art hopelessly inadequate on occasion.

Everywhere the point of view of the poet is that of the social reformer rather than that of the artist. He would have art teach us *how* we may better the life of earth and, in consequence, finds science and morality inseparably connected with it. This may be clearly seen in Carman's conception of a modern poet: "the poet and every other artist, in fact, ought and must be a normal man . . . with all the best powers and capabilities of manhood in him. He must be capable of thought, capable of manual labour, capable of passion. No one lacking in these three essentials, or lacking in any one of them,

can be called a normal man; nor can he have anything valuable and great to say to us about life."[1]

Having thus briefly, although we hope not inadequately, set forth the artistic theories of the poet, let us now examine the effect of these theories upon his later verse. In the first place, it is to be remarked that the emotional range of this verse is distinctly narrower than that of the early poems. In accordance with his conviction that art must never leave us sad or depressed, Carman takes care to "embody in his work only (or at least very nearly so) his gladsome and encouraging experiences, letting his darker hours perish unrecorded."[2] The poems are thus one long pæan of joy and, as such, have a decided tendency to become monotonous. Only in the elegies, and even there the last note is always one of gladness, does the poet give anything approaching sufficient expression to the bleak grandeur of human sorrow. Elsewhere, there is plenty of light but, with the exception of a glimpse of timid melancholy now and then, no shade of any kind. Such verses as the following are wholly inadequate, in our opinion, to cast into relief a transport of joy continued through some hundred lyrics.

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[1] Cf. Arnold's "Wordsworth."

"It is important to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question, How to live."

[2] "He (the modern artist) may sometimes think life difficult, and poetry the most thankless of all pursuits; but he must still be glad to be alive, or no one will care whether he lives or not. Above all he must see to it that no drop of the poison of *ennui* finds its way into his work. He must be so loyal to his beautiful art, that he will gladly keep it unimpaired by any chance misfortune of his own. However like a failure his own career may seem to him; however utterly he may lose at times the wholesome appetite for life, the longing for wisdom and beauty, the zest for achievement; however his spirit and flesh may fail before the mighty and inexorable enigma, he will still bear himself with courage before others, and look forth upon the confused concourse of life with an uncraven mind. So doing, he will utter no word of personal plaint, but carefully guard his poetry from the note of dejection. For he will perceive that his art is greater than himself, and scrupulously embody in his work only his gladsome and encouraging experiences, letting his darker hours perish unrecorded."

(The Poetry of Life).

"And now the quiet rain-wind
Comes from the soft grey sea,
To haunt thy April lover
With lonely pangs for thee."
(Songs of the Sea Children.)

This suppression,—the word is scarcely too strong,—by the poet of his more sombre experiences not only makes for monotony in his work, it tends also to some extent to alienate our sympathies from it. Only when at our best can we enter thoroughly into the spirit of the poems; in our less cheerful and less optimistic moods we feel out of touch with it. The poet's heart does not *seem* to vibrate in harmony with our own, and we turn willingly for solace to less exalted but apparently more human writers. His unfailing optimism too often gives one the *false* impression of never having been put to test. It is doubtless true, as Carman says, that "in poetry, whatever gives us a touch of glad encouragement, of hope, of aspiration, of solace, that do we eagerly seize and hold:" but this also is equally true,—humanity will ever receive such inspiration most readily from one who, it recognizes, has known fully the severity of its struggles. Without "the medicine bottle" before our eyes, where would be the enheartening example of Stevenson's splendid courage; and—to quote the supreme instance of all—without the knowledge of the Passion, where would be the solace of the Christian dogma? The work of Carman, like that of Emerson, although for different reasons, is too aristocratic in feeling to stir profoundly the popular heart: and being so, it fails to fulfil the purpose with which it was written. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

In the second place, the theory of Carman that Art must give us intellectual satisfaction, that it must have some bearing on that difficult question, How to live, makes in practice for a certain monotony in the choice and treatment of the themes. We do not mean to imply that it invariably induces the poet "to go about seeking concrete vehicles for ready-made ideas or

to attempt to dress a philosophy in metaphors." That would be doing Carman a grave injustice. With all true artists, he holds poetry to be a flower of spontaneous growth but—and this is the important point—he sees a necessity for preparing the soil from which it is to spring. Art being the expression of the individual, it is the duty, he thinks, of the individual to cultivate all his powers; "the man behind the faculty—that is the important thing." Still, in his case, as in the case of the English writer, Robert Browning, "it is true in a peculiar degree that the eye of the poet brings with it what it sees. He is, as a rule, conscious of no theory, and does not construct a poem for its explication;" but nevertheless, it will be shown "that a theory rules him from behind; and that profound convictions arise in the heart and rush along the blood at the moment of creation, using his soul as an instrument of expression."[1]

In dealing with the evolution of the poet's thought, we had occasion to mention that the foundations of his belief rest largely upon his vernal experiences. Even in his earlier work, the significance of the inspiration of Spring seems to have already become something of an obsession. He speaks, for example, of Shelley having "wandered far with Spring for guide," and of Blake having taken "the hounds of Spring to find the forgotten trails of mirth." He hails R. L. Stevenson as one of those

> "In whom the truant gipsy blood,
> Under the frost of this pale time,
> Sleeps like the daring sap and flood
>
> That dream of April and reprieve!
> You whom the haunted vision drives
> Incredulous of home and ease,
> Perfection's lovers all your lives."[2]

In his later poems, however, the poet adopts a more didactic

(1) "Browning": Henry Jones.

(2) "A Seamark." The poem is a very fine piece of work.

strain. In the "Songs from a Northern Garden," he is not content with giving in "Our Lady of the Rain" an eloquent description of the coming Spring but pleads also for a closer intimacy with the life of earth.

"Be thou the West wind's brother
And kin to bird and tree,
The soul of Spring may utter
Her oracles to thee."

This covert, and indeed in many cases frank, didacticism permeates all the other volumes of "The Pipes of Pan." In "The Green Book of the Bards," for example, the inspirational value of Spring is almost the sole theme of the poet:—"The Madness of Ishtar" proclaims the purpose of the Nature Spirit to be the creation of beauty and the perfecting thereby of this terrestrial existence." "A Creature Catechism" shows how all things are under one law,—the flying fish feel "the primal wish of earth take form," the butterflies emerge "with pulvil of gold on a tissue of green and blue, the maples give heed to the summons and banner the hills with vermilion and gold, the frogs take up their silver pipes again, and the artists, the type of God's will to the tribes of the earth, model their joy into fresh apparitions of beauty." "Sursum Corda" and "The Word at the Beginning" are practically repetitions of the same idea. One wonders what imp of perversity induced the poet to place these three pieces one after the other in his collected poems. None of them are calculated to arouse any great degree of enthusiasm in the reader, and the three taken together are almost as intolerable as the firstly, secondly, and lastly, of an old Scotch sermon. The next poem but one, "From an Old Ritual," continues in the same vein but more effectively. It seems to us to express adequately in its seven quatrains all what the others do in some fourteen pages.

To trace further the expression of these ideas through the voluminous work of the poet would be tedious and futile. We shall have to refer to them again on several occasions, but for

the present there must be an end. They have unquestionably given birth to some very fine poetry,—and unfortunately also to much that is merely commonplace,—but enough has been said here to illustrate the strong hold they possess over the imagination and thought of the poet.

Not only, however, does "the miracle" of spring occupy too large a place in Carman's work, but it is always treated from the same standpoint,—that of the poet's philosophy. And this may be said of most of the other themes also. Most of the poems of "From the Book of Myths" are little more than embroideries of the idea that it is through the media of the senses that the soul is awakened to a perception of the purpose of creation. The following lines from "The Pipes of Pan"[1] are fairly characteristic of the general trend of the volume:

> "... the music of the earth
> Helping joy-of-heart to birth,
> . . . . . .
> Means that wisdom lurks behind
> The enchantment of the mind;
> And your longing keen and tense
> Still must trust the lead of sense,—
> Hint of colour form, and sound,—
> Till it reach the perfect round,
> And completed blend its strain
> With the haunted pipes again."

Even what may be called the secondary ideas of the book are, for the most part, connected with the same philosophy. Pan, for example, in endeavouring to give vent to his desire for Syrinx (perfection) says

> "I must feel, but reason too—
> Find the perfect form and fashion
> For the elemental passion."

(1) The poem bearing the title.

The necessity for cultivating all the powers of our "triunistic" nature, which is implied in the two last quotations, Carman insists upon with ever increasing earnestness. On the positive side, if one may use the expression, we have in Christmas Eve at St. Kavin's: "Be body, mind, and soul, Subject to love's control;" in The Prayer in the Rose Garden: "Make me, Lord, for beauty, . . . Body, mind, and spirit;" in Memorial Day, a spring poem: "Shall the heart cease from longing, the mind from its loftiest creed, Or the senses refuse their due service?" In the Angels of Man, a symbolical piece, we meet with "Rafael, the enraptured soul," "Gabriel, the all-seeing mind," and "Michael, the artificer of beauty." Even in the lyrics claiming, with what seriousness we do not know, to be restorations of the lost songs of Sappho, we find an invocation of Pan, Hermes, and Aphrodite (No. IV.), and a bestowment of "glowing and craving soul," "knowledge," and "beauty" (No. VII.). On the negative side, we have in The Dead Faun the query (to which the subject suggests the answer): "Do beauty and love without bitter knowledge attain This and no more?" and in The Puritan Captain the sententious reflection: "Ye cannot free man's spirit and leave his senses bound." (The season is again spring.)[1]

Now against the poet's philosophy we have nothing to say. "Unitrinianism," as he calls it, seems to us at least as interesting as most "-isms," and is undoubtedly capable—which many are not—of useful practical application.[2] Nor do we object to its expression in poetry so long as the poet finds in it a source of sufficiently varied thought and emotion. This, however, as a rule, Carman does not find. Too often he merely repeats in precept or parable the basic principles of his creed, forgetting that while repetition has its uses as a pedagogical expedient, it

(1) It must not be inferred that we would condemn all these poems because they happen to be expressive of Carman's unitrinian conception. Some of them, notably "Memorial Day" and "The Dead Faun," are among the most perfect poems that Carman has written. The poet has, however, a tendency to select, perhaps unconsciously, themes which lend themselves readily to parabolic treatment.

2 See Appendix:—"An Apostle of Personal Harmonizing."

is wholly condemnable in art. For to be a teacher is one thing and to be a poet is another, as both Carman and French Canadian literature attest.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARMAN SPIRIT.

THROUGHOUT all the stages of his evolution from child of nature to metaphysician, and from metaphysician to poet-missionary, Carman exhibits three characteristics that make always for artistic righteousness; an inveterate craving for adventure, a passion for beauty, and an infinite tenderness of heart. The first of these characteristics would seem to be, in part at least, a product of his early environment. Born in a maritime province, "he was accustomed as a child to ships, and his nursery tales were stories of adventure. The sunlit and limitless highroads called him eternally to vaster chances and unexplored lands. The strange new tokens of foreign peoples were familiar sights; his daily walk was among innumerable reminders of civilizations and customs not his own."[1] Something of the old Viking spirit was bred in his soul and, despite the many vicissitudes of his life, it has never left him. The expression of this spirit in its pristine, or what would at any rate appear to its pristine, simplicity may be found in the sea poems. "I was born, the poet says in "A Son of the Sea."

> ". . . for deep sea-faring;
> I was bred to put to sea;
> Stories of my Father's daring
> Filled me at my mother's knee.[2]
>
> I was sired among the surges:
> I was cubbed beside the foam;
> All my heart is in its verges
> And the sea-wind is my home."

Much the same note is struck in "The Ships of St.

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[1] "Seaboard and Hillward" (The Kinship of Nature.)

[2] One must not, perhaps, read the lines too literally.

John," a poem in which Carman explicitly acknowledges the profound influence that Canada-by-the-sea has exercised upon his temperament. To realize fully, however, how deep has been this influence, one must turn to such symbolical poems as "The Shadow Boatswain" and "The Master of the Isles." Through these poems rings clear and high a note of indomitable courage; Life, Death, and The Great Beyond, all are faced in a spirit of imperial adventure.[1] Like some dauntless sailor of old, the poet stands curiously on the shores of being and the tradition of the fabled Indies will not let him be. Everything speaks to him of the yet uncharted lands of beauty and truth,—"there are rumours in the pine-tops, there are whispers in the grass." Somewhere, sometime, the Master of the universe will steer him safely to the far-off haven of his dreams, and, in that unshakable faith, he has no fear "to slip the cable and take the tide."

This passion for adventure was reinforced by the singular combination of "wander-lust" and æsthetic craving which, as we have already pointed out, the poet feels intensely in spring and autumn. Life is always viewed thus by Carman as a kind of exhilarating adventure in quest of beauty. As is strikingly

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[1] . . . . . .

"Just beyond our utmost fathom
Is the anchorage we crave,
But the Master knows the soundings
By the reach of every wave.

Just beyond the last horizon,
Vague upon the weather-gleam,
Loom the Far-off Isles forever,
The tradition of a dream.

There a white and brooding summer
Haunts upon the gray sea-plain,
Where the gray sea-winds are quiet
At the sources of the rain.

There where all world-weary dreamers
Get them forth to their release,
Lie the colonies of kindred,
In the provinces of peace.

. . . . . .

What imperial adventure
Some wide morning it will be,

apparent in "The Songs from Vagabondia" the poet goes forth, in the words of Richard Hovey,

> "Rejoicing in the road he wanders on
> As much as in the hope of journey done."

Closely connected, however, as is in Carman's case this passion for beauty with the passion for adventure, one must never confound the two. Both make for freedom, but whereas the freedom of the latter tends towards anarchy, that of the former is a perfect obedience to law. The cry of the joint authors of the "Songs from Vagabondia,"

> "Off with the fetters
> That chafe and restrain!"

is the expression of the one; The Prayer in the Rose Garden "Make me, Lord, for beauty, . . . Body, mind, and spirit," is the expression of the other.

All this is exemplified in the attitude of the poet towards religion. On the one hand, he is the most uncompromising of non-conformists, in the large sense of the word. He is a believer, of course, for he "feels" the existence of a purposeful and beneficent Deity,[1] but any reflective interpretation of that belief he considers as "probably ephemeral and certainly transitory. Creeds are but inns for the pious wayfarer upon the

> Sweeping in to Lonely Haven
> From the chartless round of sea!
> (The Master of the Isles.)

[1] It is noteworthy that Carman's conception of the Deity, as expressed in his poems, is very different from the austere sublimity into the presence of which Emerson enters with bared head and unshod feet. One meets such lines as,

> "God's bad dream we wander in."

> "Thou art the phrase for gladness
> God coined when he was young."

> "It was the old Musician
> With nothing else to do . . . ."

Only in one poem, "Overlord," does Carman give dignity and grandeur to his conception. Religion is "joy" for him rather than "reverence." In this respect, he differs strikingly from Wilfred Campbell.

road to perfection.[1] We are all higher vagabonds, as it were, putting up now with one host, now with another." All dogmas, Christianity included, he would submit to the touchstones of reason and experience. He believes and cherishes "the words of the Sermon on the Mount not because Christ uttered them, but because in our inmost being we cannot help assenting to their lofty truth." On the other hand, Carman pleads everywhere for the exercise of those virtues which tend to gladden and glorify the life of earth: toleration, humaneness, moderation, and, last but not least, an unceasing care for beauty in every department of our daily routine.

> "The oldest faith is better
> Than the newest doubt, if only beauty,
> Gladness, loving kindness, strength and patience,
> Spring therefrom. Let perfect wisdom follow."

In these lines, one fancies, there is a true expression of the poet's attitude towards creed and dogma. It is not what one believes that is important, it is how far that belief is creative of beauty and joy. A fanatic is for him a sour and unlovely individual, and as such wholly condemnable; "it matters not whether he is a religious fanatic or a free-thinker." And a

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1 "In French Canadian legendry,
A rising from the dead occurs,
Each Christmastide. The old curé
With his parishioners

Around him, in the night returns;
And while his voice renews its bond
In the beloved offices
The ghostly flock respond.

Just so we keep the forms of faith
That wrought and moved us long ago;
We mark the height man's soul attained,
Forgetting it must grow

Those venerable outgrown shells
Wherefrom the radiant life is fled,—
We wrong with our idolatry
The dogmas of the dead."

(The Church of the Leaves.)

preacher, the "brazen skulker" from the fields of fair performance, is equally an abomination. The artist—"one who puts brains and heart into the work of his hands—hasn't much time left for lamentations. He doesn't know what "tædium vitae" means. . . . Whenever you hear a man going up and down the world reviling the times continually—he is a preacher. If he isn't a preacher by profession, he is a preacher by nature, which is worse. The habit of preaching has taken hold upon him, and is eating into his vitals. 'Happy is he who has been apprenticed to trade and taught to preach beauty with his hands,' says the Book of St. Kavin."

Everywhere, thus, Carman is at once the advocate of freedom and the Sir Galahad of the beautiful. Such poems as "The Sceptics" are not attacks upon religion and religious observances, but upon the cant and humbug that sacrifice the joys of the present upon the altar of a visionary futurity. One cannot well imagine the poet, however, an assiduous churchgoer. He is no "Praise-God-Barebones" who could stifle his æsthetic nature in the too often barn-like edifices of Nonconformity; and he is certainly not the intellectual helot who could admit the preposterous claims of the apostolic priesthoods. "There is no happiness for us humans," he says with insistence, "save in the normal exercise of our senses, our intelligence, our emotions. If we claim that privilege for all men, we shall have an ample serviceable creed enough, and if we attempt to secure it, we shall have a happy enough task."

We have left to the last the greatest and most delightful characteristic of the poet, his profound and wide-reaching tenderness of heart. "Brother and sister," to use the simple and expressive phraseology of the North-American Indian, "there is his attitude towards creation."[1] The shy woodflowers, the

1 "The marigolds are nodding:
I wonder what they know.
Go listen very gently;
You may persuade them so.

bending yellows birches, the young winged maples with their rosy pods, the slim ash, and the flowering locust, the solitary and self-sufficient elms; all "the glad things growing" in forest and meadow, his soul knows, loves, and understands. Like a disembodied spirit, it feels the swoon of the poppies and dances with the daisies and marigolds. Not even Wordsworth ever wrote anything more exquisitely touching than the following stanzas:

"I saw the Quaker Ladies,
Those Innocents that strew
The flooring of the forest
With their tiny stars of blue.

I looked upon their faces,
Companioned yet alone;
And this foolish heart that loved them
Grew simple as their own.

For their eyes are full of quiet,
And their days are full of peace;
And I will pass to-morrow
Content to my release,

If but the Wind above me
Say, 'Wayfellow of mine
There be other Quaker Ladies
Upon other slopes of pine.'"

Go, be their little brother,
As humble as the grass,
And lean upon the hill-wind,
And watch the shadows pass.

Put off the pride of knowledge,
Put by the fear of pain;
You may be counted worthy
To live with them again.

Be Darwin in your patience,
Be Chaucer in your love;
They may relent and tell you
What they are thinking of."

(Marigolds.)

For all the lowly things of nature, the poet has the same overflowing love. On every page of his work, there is a tribute to some "little brother," insect, moth, or bird, who "dimly wears the features and attributes of God." He listens lovingly to the small, thin voice of the cricket, to the "silvery" pipe of the frog, and even to the harsh, although singularly human, croak of the crow. The songsters of the Canadian groves, bobolincolns, whippoorwills,[1] orioles, and others with more familiar names, fill him with passionate delight. Above all, he would seem to love the joyous thrushes. From his earliest volume with the beautiful lyric, "Call to me, thrush, when night grows dim," to his latest with the fine lines

> "When to the hemlock solitudes return
> The gold-voiced thrushes . . . ."

Carman sings everywhere the praises of this ecstatic melodist.

"It is a religious feeling," says the poet in "The Kinship of Nature," "this special love of the natural world, and entirely modern." One must beg leave to doubt the truth of the last statement. If tradition and custom speak truly, the American Indian has loved Nature from time immemorial.

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[1] "When the Colonial poet is making pictures of all that lies without he cannot ignore the birds and beasts and flowers of his native wilderness. Goldenrod and wattle, gophers and wombats, bobolinks and mopokes -if he would, he could not keep them out of his descriptive verse. The occasional English reader looks askance at their queer unfamiliar names—gargoyles of verbiage that for him have no ulterior significance. Word-play would have been easier for the Australian or Canadian poet if these creatures had been named more euphonously, less fantastically. However, he does his duty by them all even at the cost of saying, for singing it was out of the question—

> 'Before the Alcheringa sighed
> In Australia desolate,
> The Kookoburra, agog, descried
> The tangled webs of Fate.'

It is a pity that the 'wise, unruffled, droll bird of the Never Never' has been handicapped by the gift of a name so ungainly and unwieldy. Feathered Socrates as he is with his dialectical beak and never failing irony, the kookaburra has no future in poetry; he cannot hope to hold his own against the ordinary owl at the odds of three such syllables."

(Poets of the Empire—"Times," June 22, 1911.)

When it comes to "bobolincolned June," the case is even worse.

"Sunlight and wind and falling leaves, birds, animals, all things," says an Indian writer, "are brothers and sisters to us."[1] Among the Wood Crees, a northern tribe, there are ceremonials in connection with bear hunting that offer eloquent testimony to the truth of his assertion. It is at least noteworthy also that the habit of Carman of giving personality to the lower forms of life is precisely in the vein of the Indian myths and animal stories.

"Those who have been reared," says the poet, "not far from the wild school of the forest, make the best citizens and friends." How far such a statement is true we do not know, but this at least is certain,—on rising from a perusal of Carman's poetry, one has the profound conviction that here in any case is a man who thoroughly justifies it. The poet has the camaraderie of Whitman with a touch of almost feminine tenderness peculiarly his own. There is all the joy of the "manly love of comrades" in "The Songs from Vagabondia," and there is all the unutterable grief for the departed friend in the elegies of "Memorabilia." To read the noble threnody on "Andrew Straton" is to know one who has all things in his heart for a companion.

> "More to me than kith or kin
> Was the silence of his speech;

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[1] "Unconsciously the Indian animal story-teller uses the words that St. Francis of Assisi, in his saintly simplicity was wont to use towards all things. That simple saint in his sense of kinship 'to all God's creatures and God's works,' spoke of Brothers Rain and Sunlight—brother or sister—that was his attitude towards creation. So with the Indian tribes. Indeed, amongst the Plains Tribes there are stories of how the animals sacrifice themselves for men: the animals are spoken of as martyrs, giving their lives so that men may live, and in the old days there were religious ceremonies in connection with the buffalo hunt in which, in one way or another, the buffalo were thanked for offering their lives so for men, and the Great Spirit, who ordained these things, was worshipped after the hunt."

(Ongwe-Honwe.)

It is interesting to note that in the creation-myth of the Mohawks the pre-human monsters are depicted as being kindly monsters.

And the quiet of his eyes
Gathered from the lonely sweep
Of the hyacinthine hills,
Better to the failing spirit
Than a river land in June:
And to look for him at evening
Was more joy than many friends."

The range of the poet's love, however, is far from being limited to the circle of his friends and acquaintances; all humanity, and more especially suffering humanity,[1] awakes in him feelings of profound and unselfish sympathy. Indeed, to comfort and enhearten his less fortunate brothers, to plead the cause of the lowly and the oppressed,—these are the great and almost the only purposes of his later art. And, however much one may deplore at times, from an æsthetic point of view, the obscuration of the poet by the humanitarian, one can only have the deepest and most sincere admiration for the man who, out of the great tenderness of his heart, gave simple and convincing utterance to the following noble creed:

"And if I share my crust,
As common manhood must,
With one whose need is greater than my own,
Shall I not also give
His soul that it may live
Of the abundant pleasures I have known.

And so, if I have wrought,
Amassed or conceived aught
Of beauty or intelligence or power,
It is not mine to hoard;
It stands there to afford
Its generous service simply as a flower."

(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

One may have to seek elsewhere for an illustration of the artist; one need go no further for an expression of the man.

[1] See "Lincoln" and "The Rough Rider."

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARMAN'S ART.

THE CANADIAN POEMS.

WITHOUT claiming for our divisions any rigorous chronological sequence,[1] we shall divide the work of Carman into four artistic periods: a period of nature verse and ballad poetry; a period of symbolism; a period of transition; and, lastly, a period of verse embodying the poet's conception of the principles of art. For the sake of convenience, we shall, further, break up the last period into two sub-divisions, devoting the one to the classical work of the poet and the other to verse which in prosody and in theme owes less to the writers of antiquity. With the aid of these divisions, between which, let us repeat, we would set up no hard and fast line of demarcation, we shall endeavour to trace the broad lines of the evolution of Carman's art.

The first period of Carman's poetry is that of the early books of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" and "Ballads of Lost Haven." It may be described as the Canadian period, for, unlike those of the others, most of its productions derive their inspiration and colour from the Grand Pré country in Nova Scotia. Carman, it must be remembered, migrated early to the New England States and the greater part of his work has been written there. It is upon these early poems, therefore, that his claim for considera-

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[1] It is extremely difficult to say at what particular era some of Carman's poems were written. The poet would seem to have some kind of "bottom-drawer" from which he draws at random when he wishes to give a volume of verse to the public. In his collected poems, the arrangement would seem to be quite haphazard. Poems belonging to one book are transferred to another apparently without reason.

tion as a Canadian poet chiefly rests.[1] Let us turn first to the lyrics of "Low Tide."

In the brief analysis of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" which we had occasion to give in a previous chapter, we mentioned the extreme susceptibility of the poet to what may be termed the stimuli of natural conditions. To this susceptibility we must again refer here, for not only has it moulded the thought of the poet but it has exercised a profound influence upon his art as well. In "Low Tide," the way in which the poet's imagination takes on the hues of his environment has something almost primitive about it. The season and the place seem to hold him as with a spell. Almost invariably his emotional states are aroused by the suggestions of his senses, and in consequence both the thought and the imagery of his poems reflect the influence that Nature has over him. To put the matter briefly, Carman not only thinks as he feels but he sees as he feels also; and, let us repeat, the feeling is inspired by Nature. All this, of course, may mean much or very little; let us see what it means in the case of Carman. The following description of the approach and arrival of Spring will serve as a kind of introductory text:—

"Yea, must we triumph when she leads,
. . . A little rain before the sun,
A breath of wind on the road's dust,
The sound of trammelled brooks undone.

Along the red glinting willow stems
The year's white prime, on bank and stream
The haunting cadence of no song,
The vivid wanderings of dream.

A range of low blue hills, the far
First whitethroat's ecstasy unfurled;

[1] Such poems as "Above the Gaspereau" were also apparently written in Canada.

And we are overlords of change,
In the glad morning of the world."

On the gracious precision of such a sketch we do not propose to insist,—it is obvious even to the most casual reader,—we may, however, be pardoned for pointing out that the manner in which the details are presumed suggests movement, not movement in time but movement in space.[1] The lines give the reader, or at least they give us, a sensation of being led, as it were, through some unbarred portal into a land where beauty is breaking out everywhere. The same peculiarity is noticeable in other Spring poems. Sometimes, the spirit of Nature would seem to take our hand and lead us "along the valleys gray with rime"; sometimes, we are made to feel ourselves part of a gay procession of birds and flowers.[2] The poems, moreover, are full of phrases which convey an idea of motion,—phrases, be it said, that appear meaningless in their setting when one first encounters them. Thus we have in "A Windflower,"—"all my trembling soul was thrilled to follow one lost mountain cry;" in "In Lyric Seasan",—"thou leadest as of old;" in "When the Guelder Roses Bloom",—"Love, the vagrant wanders home." The same kind of thing is characteristic of the autumn lyrics. In "The Vagabonds," we have such verses as these:

"We came unlooked for as the wind
Trooping across the April hills,

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[1] Compare:—

"I saw in Newtowne lately a vision of the Spring,—
The glory of New England come back with blade and wing.
First came the sturdy willows, in coats of greenish grey
They marched beside the river in jubilant array;
And then along the roadsides where whitening orchards lean,
The pomp of golden hedges, with bannerings of green;
In deepest garden corners, bringing the wildwood near,
I saw the mystic trillium and violet appear."

(The Puritan Captain.)

[2] In "Afoot," for example. (Sometimes we seem ourselves to be moving while Nature is standing still, sometimes the reverse is the case. In "Afoot," all things seem to be moving together).

When the brown waking earth had dreams
Of summer in the Wander Kills.

. . . . . .

We go unheeded as the stream
That wanders by the hill-wood side,
Till the great marshes take his hand
And lead him to the roving tide.[1]

In the lyric, "Wayfaring," one has a vivid impression of a universe in flux. (We quote a few stanzas to show with how little distortion of the natural landscape the poet obtains his effect.)

"Across the harbour's tangled yards
We watch the flaring sunset fail;
Then the forever questing stars
File down along the vanished trail,

. . . . . .

Westward and lone the hill road gray
Mounts to the sky line sheer and wan,
Where many a weary dream puts forth
To strike the trail where they are gone.

. . . . . .

The noise is hushed within the street;
The summer twillght gathers down;
The elms are still; the moonlit spires
Track their long shadows through the town.

And with no haste or any fear
We are as children going home
Along the marshes where the wind
Sleeps in the cradle of the foam."

The extreme frequency of this sense of movement in all the

[1] The subordination of man to the rhythm of Nature is noteworthy. The lyric would seem to have been the parent of the "Songs from Vagabondia."

spring and autumn lyrics[1] and its entire absence from the winter poems seem to us to point to one conclusion; the poet's vision is coloured by his migrant instinct,—feeling as a vagabond, he sees as a vagabond. How otherwise can one explain this image of Nature?

"Girt with the twilight she is grave,
The strong companion, wise and free;
She leads beyond the dales of time,[2]
The earldom of the calling sea—

Beyond these dull green miles of dike,
And gleaming breakers on the bar—
To the white kingdom of her lord,
The nameless Word, whose breath we are."

Deny, or forget for one instant, that Carman is wholly possessed by the migrant instinct in spring and autumn and all these lyrics degenerate into sheer rigmarole.

The ever present suggestion of the season in these poems is vastly enhanced by the way in which the poet's imagination, and

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[1] This is met with even in later poems:—

"With their innocent, grave faces (the poppies) lifted up to meet my own,
They are but the stranger people, swarthy children of the sun,
Gypsies tenting at our doors to vanish ere the year is done."
(In a Grand Pré Garden).

[2] Compare:—

"You whom the wander spirit loves
To lead by some forgotten clue
Forever vanishing beyond
Horizon brinks for ever new;

The road unmarked, ordained, whereby
Your brothers of the field and air
Before you, faithful, blind and glad,
Emerged from chaos pair by pair;

The road whereby you too must come
In the unvexed and fabled years
Into the country of your dream,
With all your knowledge in arrears."
(A Seamark).

more particularly his symbolistic sense, plays upon the details of his surroundings. The "seraph almoners" of spring are "the lonely shadow-girdled winds;" Nature, in autumn, is "she within whose hands alone the days are gathered up as fruit;" the heart of his lost beloved, in Winter, is "a woven part of the flurry and drift of the whirling snow." We quote a few other typical instances from the autumn lyrics.

"To-day, where *russet* shadows are, . . ."[1]

"The sleepless guide to that outland
Is the great mother of us all
Whose moulded dust and dew we are[2]
With *the blown flowers by the wall.*"

"The plain at Martock lies and drinks
The long Septembral gaze of blue;
The royal leisure of the hills
Hath wayward memories of you."[3]

Often, such a suggestion from Nature as that contained in our second quotation furnishes the poet with the inspiration of a lyric. Take the title poem of the volume for example. The first verse gives us the impression made upon the poet by the "glories" of evening; the remainder of the lyric shows the

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[1] The visual epithet in these lyrics is much more felicitous than in the later poems.

[2] Compare:—

"In the beginning God made man
Out of the wandering dust, men say;
And in the end his life shall be
A wandering wind and blown away."
(The Vagabonds.)

"Pillared dust and fleeing shadow
As the road-side wind goes by,
And the four-score years that vanish
In the twinkling of an eye."
(Pulvis et Umbra.)

The image in the text would appear to be the parent of these images.

[3] The poet finds scattered here and there in Nature the attributes of his ideal.

gradual symbolization of these "glories." The key-note of the whole is struck in the epithet "unelusive."

"The sun goes down and over all
These barren reaches by the tide[1]
Such unelusive glories fall,
I almost dream they yet will bide
Until the coming of the tide."

"Unelusive," too, had seemed his bliss of the preceding year:—

"Was it a year or lives ago
We took the grasses in our hands,
And caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands."

And most of all his little hour of love;—

"Then all your face grew light, and seemed
To hold the shadow of the sun;
The evening faltered; and I deemed
That time was ripe and years had done
Their wheeling underneath the sun."

All mortal joy is thus like the splendours of evening "brief even as bright." The last verse completes the symbolism.

"The night has fallen, and the tide . . .
Now and again comes drifting home

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[1] Charles Roberts has described these "barren reaches" in "Tantramar Revisited":—

"Skirting the sun-bright uplands stretches a riband of meadow,
Shorn of the labouring grass, bulwarked well from the sea,
Fenced on its seaward border with long clay dikes from the turbid
Surge and flow of the tides vexing the Westmoreland shores.
Yonder, towards the left, lie broad the Westmoreland marshes,—
Miles and miles they extend, level, and grassy, and dim,
Clear from the long red sweep of flats to the sky in the distance . . . .
Ah! how well I remember those wide red flats, above the tide-mark,
Pale with the scurf of the salt, seamed and baked in the sun!"

Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven sound or foam;
In grief the flood is drifting home."

On the imagery and metrical effects of this delightful lyric we cannot dwell here. We quoted from it solely with a view to showing how the imagination of the poet responds to the stimuli of his environment, and all else must be ruthlessly if reluctantly put on one side. It will not be out of place, however, to point out that the unity of the poem depends upon the suggestion of the opening verse. A very beautiful lyric of somewhat similar construction is "A Northern Vigil." Once again we have at the beginning of the poem a suggestion from Nature:

"The heart of the forest grieves
In the drift against my door;
A voice is under the eaves,
A footfall on the floor."

In these lines one not only hears the eerie sough of the wind but one feels that somehow the barrier between dream and actuality has been removed. One is transported into the tense atmosphere of the lonely North; and there, with strained senses, one has the sensation of

"Threshold, mirror, and hall,
Vacant and strangely aware,"

—the presentiment that the poet's dead love will return to him. As in "Low Tide," the emotion called into being by a sensational experience colours the imagination of the poet and gives unity to the lyric.[1]

[1] In this lyric as in "Wayfaring" the visual image is very frequently given a semi-symbolical significance:—

"When day put out to sea
And night makes in for land,
There is no lock for thee,
Each door awaits thy hand!

"The windows of my room
Are dark with bitter frost,
The stillness aches with doom
Of something loved and lost.

. . . . . .

Come, for the years are long,
And silence keeps the door,
Where shapes with shadows throng
The firelit chamber floor.

. . . . . .

And though thy coming rouse
The sleep-cry of no bird,
The keepers of the house
Shall tremble at thy word.

. . . . . .

The curtains seem to part;
A sound is on the stair,
As if at the last . . . I start;
Only the wind is there."

There is little that is merely fanciful in the lyric; rather is it an accurate transcription of what is for some a not unusual experience. Given the surroundings and the suggestion, many a Northener could not have felt otherwise.

It is interesting to compare this poem with the second verse of "The Unreturning." Here also the thought of his dead love is suggested to the poet by a sense impression.

"The great white moon across my door
A shadow in the twilight stirs;
But now for ever comes no more
That wondrous look of hers."

From what has been already said, it will be gathered that

When the zenith moon is round,
And snow-wraiths gather and run,
And there is set no bound
To love beneath the sun.

these lyrics of "Low Tide" may be roughly divided into two distinct although not mutually exclusive classes: poems the inspiration of which is the impression produced upon the poet by the season and where the descriptions are modified accordingly, and poems where the transcriptions of nature indicate the source of the inspiration. "In Lyric Season," "The Pensioners," "When the Guelder Roses Bloom," "Afoot," "Wayfaring," "The End of the Trail," belong to the first class; and "Low Tide on Grand Pré," "The Unreturning," "At the Voice of a Bird," "A Northern Vigil," and perhaps "The Eavesdropper," to the second. These two classes present one common feature, the descriptions are almost invariably suggestive. Carman rarely describes in these poems nature for itself, and still more rarely does he make it expressive of preconceived thought; usually he either depicts it as vaguely reflective of his emotions,[2] or as the origin of a suggestion[3] of which his poem is to give the imaginative development. And, as we have pointed out, he has always the greatest respect for the reality. In his transcriptions of nature his imagination is selective rather than distortive. What, for example, could be more faithful to actuality and at the same time more suggestive of the "faery"

[1] Poems like "Wayfaring" belong to the first class with regard to their main inspiration, and to the second with regard to the inspiration of their details. Such love poems as "Marion Drury," although their primary inspiration places them outside both categories, belong to the first as far as regards treatment. The poet feels Nature calling him to enjoy the world of beauty around him and at the same time feels the need of his lost companion.

"Marion Drury, Marion Drury,
How are the marshes filled with you!
Grand Pré dreams of your coming home,—
Dreams while the rainbirds all night through,

Far in the uplands calling to win you,
Tease the brown dusk on the marshes wide;
But never the burning heart within you
Stirs in your sleep by the roving tide."

[2] See the latter half of the above quotation. Nature is calling the poet, and he, feeling the need of his companion, imagines it is calling her also.

[3] The opening verses of "A Northern Vigil;" the second verse of "The Unreturning;" the description of the tree in "The Eavesdropper."

atmosphere of the remainder of the poem than this exquisite description from "The Eavesdropper."

> "Outside, a yellow maple tree,
> Shifting upon the silvery blue
> With small innumerable sound,
> Rustled to let the sunlight through."

And, again, what lover of nature is there who has awakened in some clear spring sun to feel his whole soul vibrate to the song of the thrush, who will not subscribe to the beauty and precision of the following image?—

> "Wake me to hear
> Thy woodland charm
> As a lone rush
> Astir in the slim
> White stream where sheer
> Blue mornings are."

To return to our two rough divisions of the poems, we must confess that, generally speaking, we find the lyrics of the first class distinctly inferior to those of the second. And for this reason,—the thoughts and feelings evoked in the poet by the seasons are as a rule somewhat vague and perhaps exceptional; and, these being transcribed metaphorically or merely suggested, one has no little difficulty at times in making out what the poems are about. At our first reading of such lyrics as "The Pensioners"[1] and "When the Guelder Roses Bloom,"[2] we failed absolutely to catch the drift of the poet's inspiration. Nor were we alone in this; one of the most competent and fearless of English critics, Mr. William Archer, confessed frankly to a

[1] The poet, stricken with grief and forced despite himself to share in the gladness of the Spring, conceives man as a pensioner of vernal life.

[2] The poet feels the desire of Spring awake in his heart, but is oppressed by a sense of its futility in view of his beloved being no longer with him.

similar difficulty.[1] True, after having read the later work of Carman, we found light break in upon the obscurity, but still a lyric can scarcely be said to be perfect that demands a fairly complete knowledge of other and subsequent productions for its rightful comprehension. And yet we would speak here with caution. Carman is a Canadian and we are not, and those experiences of his—the feeling of the migrant instinct, for example—which appear somewhat exceptional to Europeans may be quite obvious and commonplace to his compatriots. We question, however, if even a Canadian would grasp easily the meaning of such a poem as "The End of the Trail." We give the opening verse.

"Once more the hunters of the dusk
Are forth to search the moorlands wide,
Among the autumn-colored hills,
And wander by the shifting tide."

At what the phrase "hunters of the dusk" signifies we can only guess, and pretty wildly at that. It may mean the senses or supersenses of the poet for ever questing in pursuit of some supreme form of beauty and endeavouring to draw from the season of fruition some hint or promise of its ultimate actualization.[2] 'Twere safer to acknowledge freely that the sense eludes us. A similar remark might be made with reference to other passages in the lyric. Take these lines,—

". . . . some hazy autumn day,
With yellow evening[3] in the skies
And rime upon the tawny hills,
The far blue signal smoke shall rise,

[1] "Poets of the Younger Generation."

[2] "Who can tell how great has been the splendour of autumn on our idea of perfection? The forces of suggestion and association are so mysterious and so strong, so delicate in their hidden working, that one's thoughts about the solemnities of death and the completion of life might well come from sources as frail as a turning leaf or a seeding thistle."
(The Kinship of Nature.)

[3] We would again call attention to the visual epithets.

To tell my scouting foresters
Have heard the clarions of rest
Bugling, along the outer sea,
The end of failure and of quest."

What "scouting foresters" may mean, we do not know. If the phrase is merely another rendering of our interpretation of "hunters of the dusk," why "foresters"? Perhaps—if one may risk another explanation—it may stand for the impression produced upon the poet by the silent tree-folk of the autumnal world who appear to him conscious of the approach of winter and the end of aspiration. Compare the following passage from the later poem "Above the Gaspereau":—

"A hush has been laid on the leaves and will not be defied.
Is the great Scarlet Hunter at last setting out on his ride
From the North with deliverance now? Were the lights we descried
Last night in the heavens his camp-fires seen far and wide,
The white signal of peace for whose coming the ages have cried?"

Whatever be the correct interpretation, however, of the phrase "scouting foresters," one must regard it as too vague and obscure. Such lapses from lucidity are much less frequent in the lyrics of the second of the two classes into which we have divided the poems of "Low Tide." Nor do they mar the beauty of "The Grave Tree" and "In the Heart of the Hills,"[1] two exquisite lyrics which were evidently written about the same era.

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[1] We cite a few verses from the latter.

"The strong red journeying sun,
The pale and wandering rain,
Will roam on the hills forever
And find him never again.

Then twilight falls with a touch
Of a hand that soothes and stills,
And a swamp-robin sings into light
The lone white star of the hills.

. . . . . .

Hitherto we have dealt with the imagination of the poet solely from the point of view of its sensitiveness to the influence of season and environment. Let us now deal with it *per se* and indicate briefly its strength. In the first place, it will already be obvious to the reader, that Carman has that genius of imagination which enables its fortunate possessor to seize instinctively the picturesque aspect of things.

"And all the swarthy afternoon
We watched the great deliberate sun
Walk through the crimsoned hazy world,
Counting his hill-tops one by one."

He has also a rich metaphorical imagination of a true romantic type. The description of the dawn at the end of "A Northern Vigil" is a fine example.

"Lo! now far on the hills
The crimson fumes uncurled,
Where the cauldron mantles and spills
Another dawn on the world."

In "The Grave Tree," this romanticism becomes almost apocalyptic.

"I shall know him[1] in the darkling
Murmur of the river bars,
While his feet are on the mountains
Treading out the smouldering stars."

Alone in the dusk he sings
And the joy of another day
Is folded in peace and borne
On the drift of the years away.

But there in the heart of the hills,
My beautiful weary one
Sleeps where he laid him down
And the large sweet night is begun."

[1] "The Scarlet Hunter" a personification of Autumn. The name is perhaps drawn from Indian tradition.

Lastly, Carman possesses a powerful symbolical imagination: he personifies abstract ideas, inanimate objects, emotions, and even sensations.

(a). . . "While the implacable warder, Oblivion,
Sleeps on the marge of a foamless sea."

(b) "So another year shall pass,
Till some noon the gardener sun
Wanders forth to lay his finger
On the peach-buds one by one."

(c) "And desire, when thou art gone,
Roves his desolate domain,
As the meadow-birds at dawn
Haunt the spaces of the rain."

A peculiar device of the poet of rendering the sum of his sensations by a sensation of touch is noteworthy here.

(d) "(We) caught the summer flying low
Over the waving meadow lands,
And held it there between our hands."

"The keen delight our hands had caught."

Occasionally, as the phrases we have quoted from "The End of the Trail" show, the poet leaves his readers completely in the dark as to what emotion or sensation his personification represents. Sometimes this is even the case where there is no pictorial image. The "Thou" in the poem entitled "In Lyric Season" is an instance of this. Here it is not the season of spring that is personified but the new life that arrives with spring,—the tide of divine energy[1] that permeates all nature. But there is nothing to indicate this. For the casual reader the personification is meaningless, and the last verses of the lyric

[1] Love which, for the poet, is an out-flowing of the energy of God.

are consequently rendered obscure:—

> " . . . . . .
> And yet I know thou wilt draw near
> When the last hour of pain and loss
>
> Drifts out to slumber, and the deeps
> Of nightfall feel God's hand unbar
> His lyric April, star by star. . . . "

In such poems, also, as "When the Guelder Roses Bloom," the symbolism is developed almost to the point of allegory and, for reasons already mentioned, the meaning of the lyric is thereby rendered extremely difficult to discern. Such defects as these, however,—if indeed defects they be and not examples of personal imperception,—are but tiny flecks upon the rare splendour of the poet's imagination. Carman errs through the strength of his symbolistic sense and not through its weakness; a vice that elsewhere in Canadian poetry one would almost be inclined to count a virtue.

Combined with a brilliant imaginative faculty, Carman exhibits in these early lyrics the scarcely less delightful gift of felicitous phrasing. Scattered profusely through "Low Tide" may be found lines of an almost Wordsworthian simplicity, the haunting charm of which is due in no small measure to the beauty of the diction.

> " . . . . I deemed
> That time was ripe, and years had done
> Their wheeling underneath the sun."
> —Low Tide on Grand Pré

> "In thy wings the beat and breathing
> Of the wind of life abides."
> —Pulvis et Umbra!

> "It is a country of the sun
> Full of forgotten yesterdays."
> —The Vagabonds.

"Did these wings which break no whisper
Brush the poppies in her hair?"
—Pulvis et Umbra.

"On the idle hills forever
There will stand the idle sun."
—The Grave Tree.

Only in the poems of this era does one encounter such exquisitely expressed, "gem-like thoughts," as Mr. Archer calls them;[1] and only there also does one meet with such a fine touch of natural artistry as this:—

"Over them in silence
Waved on the dusk afar
The gold flags of the Northern light
Streaming with ancient war."
—The Yule Guest.

Afterwards, one has but remembrance and regret. There splendid lilies and roses, but the fragrant wood-violets are gone.

Before leaving these lyrics of "Low Tide," one must make at least cursory mention of what is not the least of their charms, their melody. One might say of them what S. T. Coleridge said of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis; "the first and most *obvious* excellence is the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaption to the subject." All these poems possess a certain song quality which lifts them at once beyond mere mechanical perfection. They may at times be rather obscure, but they are always imaginative, always musical. And, after all, is that not almost enough? To the poet who could write

[1] These are less common in "Behind the Arras" and the "Ballads of Lost Haven."

"Are not crickets and all field-wise creatures
Brahmins of the universal grass?"
(Beyond the Gamut.)

"She had the lonely calm and poise
Of life that waits and wills."
(The Yule Guest.)

"Then twilight falls with the touch
Of a hand that soothes and stills,"
—In the Heart of the Hills.

all things must be forgiven. For of such is the Kingdom of Art.

Carman is not only a poet of the land, he is a poet of the sea also. The racing tides of Fundy, the storms, the mists, the intervals of smiling peace, the grim superstitions of the sea-faring folk,—all these were woven into his young life and, when the gift of expression became his, formed for long part and parcel of his artistic material. Throughout the lyrics of "Low Tide" there is, as he himself puts it, "a murmur of the sea upon his lips." It is, however, in "The Ballads of Lost Haven" and in "The Wraith of the Red Swan," that this murmur swells into full volume and significance. For some reason or other, or perhaps through mere inadvertence, Carman has excluded this latter piece from his collected poems. The omission is in any case culpable, for the poem is of the best and most typically Canadian things in the literature of the Dominion. Indeed it, as has been often too rashly affirmed, the poetry of Canada be "the poetry of the canoe," then certainly "The Wraith of the Red Swan" is alone worthy to represent it. What could be more romantic and yet more palpably realistic than this description of a storm?

"Last midnight the thunder rode
With the lightning astride of the storm
Low down in the east, where glowed
The fright of his form
On the ocean-wild rack he bestrode.

The hills were his ocean wan,
And the white tree-tops foamed high,
Lashed out of the night, whereon
In a gust fled by

A wraith of the long Red Swan,[1]
A wraith of the long Red Swan."

Turning to the Ballads themselves, one may for the sake of convenience divide them into two classes: ballads of legendary interest and symbolical ballads.[2] Those of the first class cannot be said as a whole to equal those of the second in imaginative power, but among them nevertheless is one poem of incomparable charm. "The Yule Guest" is the most impressive ballad in Canadian poetry and perhaps one of the very finest of its kind since the days of Scott and Coleridge. For once, Carman manages to combine absolute clarity with all the strength and sweetness of his romantic imagination, and the result is a real contribution to the things that are great. The story of the ballad, that of a drowned sailor who returns for one brief night to his wife on the anniversary of their wedding, is conventional enough, but what eerie beauty the poet has witched out of it! The simplicity of the form, the haunting cadence, and the fine flights of fancy, make it linger in the memory long after more ambitious work is wholly forgotten. In the ballad, moreover, Carman does what few have ever accomplished successfully; he humanizes the fantastic. "Yanna" with her "harvest-yellow hair" and "sea-gray eyes" is no chromo-lithographical figure; she is a living woman and acts as such. A touch like the following, to cite only one instance, recalls vividly Doña Sol in the first act of "Hernani."

"O Garvin, there is heartache
In tales that are half told;
But ah, thy cheek is pale to-night
And thy poor hands are cold."

Of the other ballads of legendary interest such as "The Nancy's Pride" and "The King of Ys," little need be said.

[1] The Author's favorite canoe so named because of the phenomenal rosiness of its bark.

[2] Some are partly legend and partly symbolism

They are invariably musical, but are otherwise neither better nor worse than the majority of similar productions. "The Kelpie Riders," one of the earliest of Carman's efforts, contains a few fine lines, but the story is too chaotic to permit of its producing any appreciable effect. A much higher artistic level is reached in "The Marring of Malyn," a poem where there are some striking passages of romantic description.

In the symbolical and semi-symbolical ballads, which differ but little in material from the others, the imagination of the poet seizes upon the sea and all that pertains to it and, without doing violence to the guise of reality, raises the whole to the level of an impressive symbolism. The sea, the beloved and mysterious sea, becomes for him a symbol of cosmic being, that vaster ocean of which time is but the merest bay, and on which, like some outbound sail, the questing soul must go forth again at the hour of death. The inevitable last voyage from this "dusty port of life" is graphically described in "The Shadow Boatswain"[1] and "The Master of the Isles," two ballads of great beauty and strength and full of the atmosphere of the real sea.

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[1] The way the poet manages in this poem to convey the impression of approaching death is admirable:—

"Is it firelight or morning,
That red flicker on the floor?
Your goodbye was braver, sweetheart,
When I sailed away before.

Think of this last lovely summer!
Love, what ails the wind to-night?
What's he saying in the chimney
Turns your berry cheek so white?

. . . . . .

There's a boding sound, like winter
When the pines begin to quail;
That must be the gray wind moaning
In the belly of the sail.

I can feel the icy fingers
Creeping in upon my bones;
There must be a berg to windward
Somewhere in these border zones.

These sea-poems differ, of course, primarily from the majority of the lyrics of "Low Tide" in that their inspiration is drawn from the world of men and not from nature; although, be it remarked, the latter in its outward aspects is none the less admirably and faithfully depicted. The symbolical ballads, which are apparently the later productions, exhibit, however, other and equally important differences. In the first place, the symbolization is a symbolization 'en bloc' and not a 'successive' symbolization as in the earlier poems. In other words, the poet conceives his poem as a whole and does not, as is apparently his method in "Low Tide," allow his imagination to body forth his thoughts and emotions as they arise in his mind. The imagery of the individual poems is in consequence less varied but more unified. In the second place, the thought is more definite,—more systematic one might almost say. When we met with a poem depicting humanity as an outworn and discouraged crew "beating up the storm of years"; such a phrase as "Man's your pilot," we had at least a shrewd suspicion that the poet was something of a transcendalist; and when we encountered the dictum "the eternal slaves of beauty are the masters of the world," we felt tolerably certain that behind the words lay fairly definite philosophical conceptions, if not a complete system. The truth of the dictum did not seem elemental enough for the phrase to be the inspiration of a moment.

A characteristic defect of these symbolical poems is that the thought is frequently obscured by its imaginative presentment. This is, as we pointed out, true also of the symbolistic images of "Low Tide," but whereas in those early lyrics one has usually some sort of "key" to the symbolism either in the poet's environment, or in the impression, that we know the season to produce upon him, here one is often hopelessly baffled.[1] A similar defect, we shall see later, is even more

[1] The sense of such pieces as "Aboard the Galleon" eludes us completely. This poem was originally published along with the poems of "Behind the Arras."

prevalent in the poems of "Behind the Arras," a book that would appear to have been written somewhere about the epoch of the symbolical ballads. Where, however, these sea ballads differ from the poems of "Behind the Arras" is in the intense realism of their symbolical imagery. Indeed, one is occasionally in doubt whether they are meant to be interpreted as symbolism or not. Such a poem as "A Captain of the Press-Gang" is a case in point. Do verses like these suggest anything beyond the call of the sea? We venture to say they do not.

"Shipmate, leave the ghostly shadows,
Where thy boon companions throng!
We will put to sea together
Through the twilight with a song.

. . . . . .

Let thy cronies of the tavern
Keep their kisses bought with gold;
On the high seas there are regions
Where the heart is never old.

. . . . . .

There the open hand will lose not
Nor the loosened tongue betray,
Signed, and with our sailing orders,
We will clear before the day; . . . ."

And yet this is what we find at the end of the poem:—

"On the shining yards of heaven
See a wider dawn unfurled. . . .
The eternal slaves of beauty
Are the masters of the world."

The effect that this verse produced upon us was distinctly disagreeable. Not only did we far from relish the discovery, that the strong realistic imagery of the preceding stanzas was merely a cloak for a philosophical conception, but we felt that somehow the cloak was badly chosen. "Slaves of beauty" suggested to us delicacy and refinement, and the phrase seemed as

incongruous with the rugged strength of the foregoing lines as, say, a pilot's oilskins with a statue of Apollo.

In one of these sea-poems Carman reverses his method, and, instead of endeavouring, as in the above poem, to treat the reality as symbolism, allows his imagination to symbolize the reality. "The Grave-digger,"[1] which depicts the sea as a fierce and grim sexton, is a fine piece of work, and, with the exception of "The Shadow Boatswain," "The Master of the Isles," and, possibly, "Outbound," far above the level of the other symbolical poems.

Before taking leave of these early poems, let us gather together the chief results of our investigations up to this point.

In the lyrics of Low Tide on Grand Pré the vision of the poet is coloured by mental states aroused by the influence of the season and by sense impressions from the objects of his

---

1 "Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
And well his work is done.
With an equal grave for lord and knave,
He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip with a rolling hip
He makes for the nearest shore;
And God, who sent him a thousand ship,
Will send him a thousand more;
But some he'll save for a bleaching grave,
And shoulder them in to shore,—
Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
Shoulder them in to shore.

. . . . . .

Oh, a loafing idle lubber to him
Is the sexton of the town,
For sure and swift, with a guiding lift,
He shovels the dead men down.

. . . . . .

Oh, crooked is he but strong enough
To handle the tallest mast;
From the royal bark to the slaver dark,
He buries them all at last.

Then hoy and rip . . . ."

Even from this maimed version, it will be evident there is a tang of the real sea about the poem.

environment. Of systematic and preconceived thought there is little or none, the poet developing, as a rule, a suggestion from Nature, and often receiving additional inspiration from his symbolistic sense as it plays freely upon the details of the natural landscape. Many lyrics are a kind of successive symbolism, concrete objects being transfigured as they come under the poet's eye, so that they become symbolic without ceasing to be real. Striking individual images are in consequence frequently met with. Nature in these poems is transcribed, as it were, body and soul.

The "Ballads of Lost Haven" differ from these lyrics in that their inspiration is drawn less directly from Nature, and also in that they, and especially those which are apparently later work, are more or less coloured by systematic thought. Their imagery, moreover, unlike that of the lyrics of "Low Tide," tends towards symbolic unity, and although Nature is well and faithfully described, such description is usually a mere embellishment of the symbolism. Detached images of a striking nature are, as might be expected from the method of composition, comparatively rare.

In all these poems, the form is simple, the versification melodious, and the diction at once gracious and unaffected. The work may be faulty at times, but its defects are easily outweighed by its great and manifold merits, not the least of which is the vivid impression of the Canadian landscape that is everywhere conveyed to the delighted reader.

CHAPTER VII.

A PERIOD OF SYMBOLISM.

THE symbolical poems of Behind the Arras stand by themselves in the work of Carman. In thought and emotion aike, they are richer and more vigorous than anything which either precedes or follows them. At times, in the feverish brilliancy of their imagery and in the almost hallucinatory grotesqueness of their fancies, they remind one strangely of the production of Emile Nelligan. Intellectually, there is, of course, nothing in common between the Anglo-Saxon poet and his unfortunate Gallic compatriot, but both have the same gorgeous and freakish imagination and both, be it added, are obsessed on occasion by the same morbid emotions of fear and despondency. The Carman who wrote "The Red Wolf" and "A Song before Sailing" is very different from the sorrow stricken but physically healthy poet who composed, say, "The Pensioners of Spring." Yet the poems of "Behind the Arras" are not the expression of a beaten soul. The poet may be disillusioned; he may be, as it were, in the grip of mental and physical disease; but still he is a fighter, and employs all the resources at his command to win his way through to health and quietude of mind. It is just this struggle, one fancies, that accounts for the emotional wealth and the jet-like display of intellectual strength that characterize the volume and give it its charm. The emotions expressed in the poems are, we have said, rich in variety. It is not difficult to justify the statement. One has fear of death in a passage of of the poem which gives its title to the collection, in "The Red Wolf" and, mingled with a kind of agnostic courage, in "In the Wings."[1] Despondency is writ large over "A Song before

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[1] We take the liberty of quoting the lyric in its entirety.

Sailing;" and heartache for the joys of the past finds moving utterance in "The Faithless Lover." Rarely in the work of Carman does one hear a note like this:—

"... Life, thou art become a ghost,
A memory of days gone by,
A poor forsaken thing between
A heartache and a sigh.[1]"

This heavy regret for the past is re-inforced by a sad sense of the transitory nature of mortal friendship and love:—

"I even have my cronies, one or two,
My cherished few,
But ah, they do not stay!
For the sun fades them and they pass away,
As I grow gray."

"The play is life; and this round earth,
The narrow stage whereon
We act before an audience
Of actors dead and gone.

There is a figure in the wings
That never goes away,
And though I cannot see his face,
I shudder while I play.

His shadow looms beside me here,
Or capers at my side;
And when I mouth my lines in dread,
Those scornful lips deride.

Sometimes a hooting laugh breaks out,
And startles me alone;
While all my fellows, wondering
At my stage-fright play on.

I fear that when my Exit comes,
I shall encounter there,
Stronger than fate, or time, or love,
And sterner than despair,

The Final Critic of the craft,
As stage tradition tells;
And yet—perhaps t'will only be
The jester with his bells."

The piece seems to us not unworthy to take place beside "The Conqueror Worm" of Edgar Poe.

[1] The plaint of Nelligan.

And by a feeling of something akin to disgust for the hustling world which seems, as Whitman puts it, "demented with the mania of owning things:—

> "They build great temples to their John-a-nod,
> And fume and plod
> To deck themselves with gold,
> And paint themselves like chattels to be sold,
> Then turn to mould."

This is the black side of the picture. "At the Granite Gate" breathes courage,—not courage born of religious faith but courage inspired by an overmastering love for the life of Nature. Death may be invested with all the terrors of the unknown, but

> "There troop by night and day
> My brothers of the field;
> And I shall know the way
> Their woodsongs have revealed.
>
> The dusk will hold some trace
> Of all my radiant crew
> Who vanished to that place,
> Ephemeral as dew."

Nor is courage of the more conventional type,—courage fostered by metaphysical certitude,—absent from the poems. Although in danger of breaking down in the earlier part of the volume, the poet's faith gathers in strength towards the end. There is nothing of doubt and fear in such poems as "The Night Express," "You and I," he says, "may sleep,"

> "For He of the sleepless hand
> Will drive till the night is done—
> Will watch till morning springs from the sea
> And the rails stand gold in the sun. . . ."

Nor, again, despite his strong distaste for the mad frenzy of

modern civilization and his equally strong predilection for "the wild dark peace of the elder earth," is the poet ever driven, as a weaker nature might easily have been, upon the dreary wastes of cynicism and misanthropy. He may give utterance to what seems a splenetic outburst on occasion but after all his love for humanity is deep-rooted and sincere. In "The Lodger," he says of his soul,

"Most of all things, it seems
He loves the town,
Watching the bright-faced streams
Go up and down,

I have surprised him often
In Tremont Street,
And marked the grave face soften,
The mouth grow sweet

In a brown study over
The men and women, . . ."

The master-passion of the volume, however, is the poet's insatiable thirst for beauty. "The Journeying Ideal," as Emerson puts it, has led him forth from the world of nature into the world of men; his love for Nature, great though it be, no longer satisfies his needs. His face is "battle-black" when viewed in the light of his youth, but he cannot retrace his steps. To Nature, who would confine him to herself, he says in "The Face in the Stream":—

"What youth was that, when the world was green,
In the lovely mythus Greek and clean,

Was doomed with his flowery kin to bide,
A blown white star by the river side,

And no more follow the sun, foot free,
Too long enamoured of one like thee?"

The joys of his lesser kin are sweet but, as the poet sang in "Pulvis et Umbra,"

"Yet from beauty, marred and broken,
Joy and memory and tears,
I shall crush the clearer honey
In the harvest of the years."

The same note of endless adventure rings out in the apostrophe to Beauty at the end of the lyric, "Exit Anima."

"Bone of thy bone,
Breath of thy breath alone,
I dare resume the silence of a stone,
Or, explore still the vast unknown,
Like a bright sea-bird through the morning blown,
With all his heart one joy,
From zone to zone."

With the metaphysical ideas of the volume we have already dealt. It is, however, necessary to mention here that not only are these ideas often obscured by their symbolical expression but they are in themselves somewhat disjointed and even incoherent. The latter half of "Beyond the Gamut" offends badly in this respect:—

The primary conception of the poet is that the visible universe is but the metaphor, as it were, of some great incomplete symphony of God. All things are manifestations of rhythm, not only is sound rhythm but colour is rhythm, and we ourselves are only made up of a mass of vibrations,[1] all our senses being but so many variations of the power of perceiving and measuring rhythm. The expression of this conception leaves nothing to be desired.

"Waves of sound (Is this your thought, Amati?)[2]
Climbing into treble thin and clear,

[1] See "Rhythm" (The Kinship of Nature) and "The Silver String" (The Making of Personality).

Compare with the lines quoted:—

"And seeing all form but the trace of motion, all beauty the vestige of joy made plain,
Shall I (Nature) stint my care or my devotion, to vex me with counting the once and again?"

(On Ponus Ridge.)

[2] The poet is playing on his violin.

Past the silence, change to waves of colour,
We must say, when eye takes place of ear?

Not a bird-song, but it has for fellow
Some wood-flower, its speechless counterpart,
Form and colour moulded to one cadence,
To voice something of the wild mute heart.
. . . . . .
Saffron butterflies and mute ephemera,
Doubt not, have their songs too, could we hear.
Every raindrop is a sea sonorous
As the great world thundering sphere to sphere."

All this is clear enough. Everything is, so to speak, a phrase of the orchestral themes of the Deity. Another verse or so, however, and the poet leaves us stranded. His thought takes, as it were, a jump.

"Peal and flash and thrill and scent and savour
Pulse through rhythm to rapture, and control,—
Who can say how far along or finely?
The infinite tectonics of the *soul*."

Here, without any warning, a new conception is introduced, that of the immanence of God. The "soul" or embryonic Divinity which lurks in all things is identified with God, in the sense that, in venting its ideals, it is at the same time venting God's ideals. Man thus,—to mention the particular case which interests the poet,—in bringing new and more delicate harmonies in the world, is at one with the Deity.[1] How can man perform such a task? Evidently, in the first instance, since all things are but manifestations of rhythm, by training his senses to a perception of already existing harmonies. He must "touch environment with every sense-tip" and thereby enable the soul within him to rummage, as the poet puts it in "The Lodger,"

[1] Compare:—
"We are a part of His life as the waves are a part of the sea."
(The Tidings of Olaf.)

"... up and down,
From string to string,
Bidding the discords drown,
The harmonies spring."

A few verses more and the poet's thought goes off at a tangent and starts to deal with the theme that in performing its natural, and hence joyous, function of bringing new harmonies to birth,—that is to say, in realizing its ideals,—the soul is at the same time realizing its own existence; in other words, the embryonic Divinity is thereby becoming more fully God, and attaining to more complete peace in consequence. This, at least, seems to us the trend of the following stanzas:—

"He's most man[1] who loves the purple shadows,[2]
Yet must love the flaring autumn too,—[3]
Follow when the skrieling pipes bid forward,
Lie and gaze for hours into the blue.

He would have gone down with Alexander,
Quelling unknown lands beneath the sun;
Watched where Buddha in the Bo tree shadows
Saw this life's web woven and undone. . . .

So shall mighty peace possess his spirit
Whom the noonday leads alone apart,
Through the wind-clear early Indian summer,
Where no yearning more shall move his heart."[4]

---

[1] And therefore most God.

[2] The more refined aspects of life. (The preceding verses are explanatory.)

[3] The burly, physical aspects of life.

Compare:—"In the first blush of our autumnal season, it is the splendour and scarlet of it that most appeal to us. The green-feasted eye, full of the luxurious leisure of the quiet foliage, picks out at once the first fleck of crimson, conspicuous as a stain,—a spilth of blood or wine on the vest of nature. . . . It is the colour of war, of energy, of manliness, of fortitude, of endurance, linking us with our primitive instincts, calling up the dejected spirit to new endeavours, heartening the discouraged and reviving the worn."
(The Kinship of Nature.)

[4] "Good," the days are chorusing, "shall triumph". . . .

If a man in daring thus everything to bring to pass the ideals of his soul be at one with God—and, apparently, the poet sees everywhere in life evidence of such action—how comes it that evil exists? The solution of the question demands naturally an examination of what constitutes good and what evil. The result of the poet's examination is expressed in the lines we have already explained in another chapter.

> "Good is every man's poor guess at wisdom;
> Evil is the soul's misuse of means."

A little further on, the poet comes back again to his primary conception of God as a kind of master-musician,—still, however, continuing to identify Him with "Soul,"—and expresses the same thought figuratively.

> "Hate is discord lessening through the ages
> Anger a false note, fear a slackened string."

The next two lines suggest the already familiar idea that the soul attains its ends by giving heed to the inspiration of Spring, the season at which it catches a glimpse, as it were, of its own perfection[1]:—

> "Key thy soul up to the wiser manhood
> Gentler lovelier joy from spring to spring."

In the following verses the poet enters upon a discussion of why evil is permitted to exist and of the reasons that lead him to believe that such existence is merely transitory. Evil is permitted, he thinks, "lest the too sweet melody grow tame;" if we had never known evil, we should be unable to appreciate good aright. It is not permanent, however, for, unlike good, it forms no part of the perfection of God.

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[1] "Waking at the word of April with the South wind at her heels,
We await the revelation locked beneath the four great seals . . . ."
(In a Grand Pré Garden.)
See also "The Madness of Ishtar," "Our Lady of the Rain," "The Heretic."

"Good is impetus to Godward;
Evil but our ignorance of laws."

The soul, to return with the poet to his first symbolism, knows the harmony it wishes to bring to pass, and, if its execution be faulty at first, its ultimate triumph is none the less certain. Considered as spirit or "soul," man, "linked to all his half-accomplished fellows," has "through unfrontiered provinces to range" before realizing his ideal; considered as body, he is "but the morning dream" of spirit,—the visible manifestation of a tentative rhythm that the morrow will see no more.[1]

Had the poet stopped upon such a thought, one would have been inclined to forgive him his previous trespasses. Unfortunately, however, he indulges in a few more mental gymnastics and ruins his climax. Without any apparent why or wherefore, he breaks out abruptly with

"Love is but the perfect knowledge,
The one thing no failure can befall,
Loving kindness betters loving credence;
Love and only love is best of all."

Whatever be the philosophical value of these lines,[2] we fail to see any connection between them and what precedes. Interjected in this manner, they read like copy-book maxims. Nor, although we vaguely surmise that they are meant to express the impermanence of everything but beauty[3]—the creation of love—do we catch the signification of the following and final stanzas.

"Beauty, beauty, beauty, sense and seeming,
With the soul of truth she calls her lord!

---

[1] The thought is not clearly expressed.

[2] Profesor Jones reproaches Browning with having linked man with God solely on the side of emotion. Carman would seem at times, as here, to be of the same opinion as Browning.

[3] Compare:—

"No trace of beauty can pass or perish but other beauty is somewhere born."

(Easter Eve.)

Stars and men the dust upon her garment;
Hope and fear the echoes of her word.

How escape we then, the rainbow's brothers,
Endless being with each blade and sod?
Dust and shadow between whence and whither,
Part of the tranquility of God."

In giving thus frankly an interpretation of "Beyond the Gamut," we lay no claim to infallibility; where others have found themselves befogged, it behoves us to walk warily. What we wished, moreover, to demonstrate was not the thought of the poem, but the, for us, incoherency of that thought.

A poem strongly resembling in some respects "Beyond the Gamut" is the title poem "Behind the Arras." Here, towards the end of the piece, we have once again an expression of the "rhythm theories" of the poet, although, be it remarked, with much less incoherency. As in "Beyond the Gamut," however, there is a tendency—and a natural one, perhaps, taking into account the conditions under which the poem was apparently composed—to sink the "poet" in the metaphysician. The piece begins "symbolically" and ends "metaphysically," with the result that what promised at the first to be an artistic masterpiece fails to be quite effective. The very strength of the symbolism[1] renders such stanzas as these something of an anti-climax:—

"I to the broken rhythm of thought and man,
The sweep and span
Of memory and hope
About the orbit where they still must grope
For wider scope,

To be through thousand springs restored, renewed,
With love imbued,

[1] See page 119 (quotation).

With increments of will
Made strong, perceiving unattainment still
From each new skill."

Let us remark, however, that it is only in these two poems of "Beyond the Gamut" and "Behind the Arras" that the metaphysician obtrudes too prominently. In the other poems of the volume, the symbolist holds undisputed sway; and, indeed, what thought there is,—many pieces are simply expressions of emotion,—is often entirely obscured by its metaphorical garb. To read any lucid meaning into such pieces as "The Moondial" and "The Sleepers,"[1] is a task that we are totally unable to perform. And yet, they are beautiful,—beautiful as some Eastern houri whose mind is to us a sealed book. Here, we strike directly at the chief merit of all these poems: comprehensible or incomprehensible, their symbolism is invariably a thing of beauty.

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1 "The tall carnations down the garden walks
Bowed on their stalks.

Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods,
'What are the odds
That we shall wake up here within the sun,
When time is done,
And pick up all the treasures one by one
Our hands let fall in sleep?' 'You have begun

To mutter in your dreams,'
Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
And they both slept again.

The tall carnations in the sunset glow
Burned row on row.

Said John-a-nods to Jock-a-dreams,
'To me it seems
A thousand years since first you stirred and spoke,

And I awoke.
Was that the wind then trying to provoke
His brothers in their blessed sleep?' 'They choke

Who mutter in their nods,'
Said Jock-a-dreams to John-a-nods.
And they both slept again.

The tall carnations only heard a sigh
Of dusk go by."

On the dedicatory page of the volume, one finds these lines:

> "I shut myself in with my soul
> And the shapes come eddying forth."

The lines are peculiarly apposite; not only do "the shapes come eddying forth" from the poet's soul, but they are at once varied and beautiful. What strength there is in this feverish vision of the ghost behind the arras of life!

> "I hear it yaw and glide,
> And then subside,
> Along these ghastly corridors and halls
> Like faint footfalls;
> The hanging stir the air;
> And when I start and challenge, "Who goes there?"
> It answers, "Where?"
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Like some invisible henchman old and gray,
> Day after day
> I hear it come and go,
> With stealthy swift unmeaning to and fro,
> Muttering low,
>
> Ceaseless and daft and terrible and blind,
> Like a lost mind,
> I often chill with fear
> When I bethink me, What if it should peer
> At my shoulder here!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then with a little broken laugh I say,
> Snatching away
> The curtain where he grinned
> (My feverish sight thought) like a sin unsinned,
> "Only the wind."

This is the poetry which "grips." It is a product of disordered nerves, it is true, but it is just such morbidity that, as witness the "Raven," Edgar Poe, often produces the most striking

imaginative verse. It is somewhat ironical that the poet who wrote the lines we have just quoted and who conceived the powerful symbolism of "In the Wings," should afterwards proclaim his conviction that "the poet, and every other artist, must be a normal man."[1]

The shapes, however, that eddy forth from the poet's soul are far from being all of this grim nature. Even the thought of death itself is embodied at times in gentler form. There is nothing awe-inspiring, for example, about "The Dustman," one of the most charming fantasies in all Carman's poetry. The opening verses are suggestive merely of the fabled sleep-bringer of a mother's lullaby.

"'Dustman, dustman!'
Through the deserted square he cries,
And babies put their rosy fists
Into their eyes.

There's nothing out of No-man's-land
So drowsy since the world began,
As 'Dustman, dustman,
Dustman.'"

This delightful and naïve touch is preserved throughout the poem. What could be more redolent of ingenuous childhood than this:—

"Dustman, dustman,
Hurry by and let me sleep.
When most I wish for you to come,
You always creep.

Dustman, dustman,
And when I want to play some more,
You never then are further off
Than the next door

[1] One wonders how the poet can reconcile his theory with his hero-worship of R. L. Stevenson and W. E. Henley.

Slowly, almost insensibly towards the end of the poem the significance of the symbolism grows clear; thought and diction rise together, and the reader is led gently by such phrases as "the monotony of time is in his face" into an older world. Then, with "the touch of a hand that soothes and stills," falls the lines:—

> "And someday, with more potent dust,
> Brought from his home beyond the deep,
> And gently scattered on our eyes,
> We too shall sleep.—"

The Deity is successively symbolized in this volume as a violinist,[1] as a juggler, and as the Driver of The Night Express.[2] The second piece of symbolism is perhaps the most effective, although all three conceptions,—bizarre as they may seem when thus curtly catalogued,—are treated with no mean poetic skill. In "The Juggler," the poet, as in the later sea-poems, symbolizes the reality. He brings us, as it were, into some fair booth and makes us share the wide-mouthed wonder of the unsophisticated country folk. The first verse of the poem, with its singularly happy prosodical suggestion, will serve to give some idea of the general conception:

---

[1] "Beyond the Gamut."

[2] "The Night Express."

> "Out through the hills of midnight,
> Hurtling and thundering on,
> The night express from the outer world
> Speeds for the open of dawn.
>
> Out of the past and gloom-wrack,
> Out of the dim and yore,
> Freighted as train or caravan
> Was never freighted before.
>
> Built when the Sphinx's query
> Was new on the lips of peace;*
> Hurled through the aching and hollow years
> Till time shall have release. . . ."

* The poet always hankers after "the wild dark peace of the elder earth."

"Look how he throws them up and up
The beautiful golden balls!
They hang aloft in the purple air,
And there never is one that falls."

One of the most striking, if also one of the most obscure, pieces of symbolism in the book is that of "The Lodger"—a strange poem in which the poet describes the working of the "immanent divine" in the human soul. The metaphysics of the poem are very much the same as those of "Beyond the Gamut," but they are put in the mouth of a typically garrulous landlady with results that are alike fantastic and wholly delightful. Nowhere have we met with a more refreshing combination of colloquialism and poetical utterance. The inevitable gossip about "the neighbors" and such protestations as, "Sir, if I dared but once set eye to keyhole," are mingled with a strain of pure poetry that runs the gamut from the conversational tone of

"Ah, sir, the summer land
For me! That is
Like living in God's hand
Compared to this. . . . ."

to the gorgeous note of

". . . . Wings of the sun, go abroad
As a scarlet desire,
Unwearied, unwaning, unawed
To quest and aspire,

Till the drench of the dusk you drink
In the poppy-field west;
Then veer and settle and sink
As a gull to her nest."[1]

Of the symbolism of "The Crimson House" (the body) and of "The Moondial," we need say little; the poems are

[1] The song of the soul.

attractive enough but not in any way remarkable. In "The Mcondial," the thought is unusually obscure and the imagery somewhat meretricious. Nor would we dwell upon the symbolism of "The Red Wolf," a rough and faulty piece of work to which we referred in another chapter. Before, however, taking leave of the symbolism of the volume, we must make mention of the poem entitled "Hack and Hew," a piece in which the "artist instinct" is treated in a striking, if not exactly beautiful, transatlantic manner.[2]

"Hack and Hew were the sons of God
In the earlier earth than now;
One at his right hand one at his left
To obey as he taught them how.

And Hack was blind and Hew was dumb,
But both had the wild, wild heart;
And God's calm will was their burning will
And the gist of their toil was art.

They made the moon and the belted stars
They set the sun to ride
They loosed the girdle and veil of the sea,
The wind and the purple tide.
. . . . . .
Then, fire and clay, they fashioned a man,
And painted him rosy brown;
And God himself blew hard in his eyes:
'Let them burn till they smoulder down.'"

Having created man, Hack and Hew think their work is finished. The "Master Workman," however, tells that their toil is just begun.

"And ye who served me of old as God
Shall serve me anew as man,

[1] "Hem and Haw" is another poem in the same genre.

Till I compass the dream that is in my heart
And perfect the vaster plan."

Thus, still the craftsman,

"Yearning, wind-swift, indolent, wild,
Toils with these shadowy two,—
The faltering restless hand of Hack,
And the tireless hand of Hew."

With all its faults, and we have made no attempt to gloss them over, "Behind the Arras," it will be seen, is a remarkable volume. The style is rougher and at times more careless than in the earlier books, but poetic power is everywhere. Nowhere else in Carman's work, as we have said, does one meet with such a wide gamut of emotion, and nowhere else also does the poet's imagination take such bold and daring flights. Nature, or rather the description of Nature, is for the nonce laid on one side pretty much, although in such an image as

"Hark,
The whippoorwill night long
Threshing the summer dark
With his dim flail of song!"—

one feels the poet has by no means lost his power of transcribing her charms. Nor, be it said, does one regret the poet's plunge into pure subjectivity. The poems of "Behind the Arras" reveal the more human side of the poet and almost, if not entirely, redeem his work from the reproach of "aristocratic feeling" that his later production, judged by itself, would seem to justify.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

A YEAR before the appearance of the poems of "Behind the Arras" Carman and his friend Richard Hovey published a volume of verse entitled "Songs from Vagabondia." Carman's contribution to the volume is noteworthy. It comprised one or two symbolical pieces after the style of those of "Behind the Arras," and a number of 'vagabond' songs (the epithet describes them accurately enough) in a style remarkable for its apparent careless spontaneity. There was nothing 'misty' about most of these latter;[1] they were plain, although often felicitous, expressions of happy-go-lucky humour, owing their charm less to brilliancy of imagination than to spriteliness of fancy, and perhaps less even to fancy than to the extreme verve of their music and the unconventionality of their diction. Of these vagabond songs, the lyrics entitled "In the House of Idiedaily" and "The Joys of the Road" are perhaps the best, although all of them are refreshing and delightful reading. We cite the opening verses of the first-mentioned, which is indeed, as Mr. Francis Thompson said, "an unforgettable little lyric."

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[1] They are, however, far from being empty as regards thought. Carman contributed:—

"The Joys of the Road."
"Spring Song."
"A More Ancient Mariner."
"A Captain of the Press-Gang."
"The Mendicants."
"The Marching Morrows."
"In the Workshop."
"The Mote."
"In the House of Idiedaily."
"Resignation."

[1] We refer to such pieces as "The Red Wolf."

" Oh, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily!

There were always throats to sing,
Down the river-banks with spring,

When the stir of heart's desire
Set the sapling's heart on fire.

Bobolincolns in the meadows,
Leisure in the purple shadows

Till the poppies without number
Bowed their heads in crimson slumber,

And the twilight came to cover
Every unreluctant lover.

Not a night but some brown maiden
Bettered all the dusk she strayed in,

While the roses in her hair
Bankrupted oblivion there.

Oh, but life went gaily, gaily,
In the house of Idiedaily! "

Whether these " Songs "[1] were written before or after the poems of " Behind the Arras " we do not know (the dates of publication of the various volumes give but little clue to the era at which their contents were composed); but this much at least is certain, the tendency of the style of the books following this latter is distinctly towards clarity of expression. In the work of " Beside the Aurelian Well," there still lingers, it is true, some of the mist that had obscured the thought of the earlier compositions,[2] —much less, however, than is generally supposed by those who fail to grasp the significance of the poet's treatment of spring,[3]

[1] "The Joys of the Road" is given in E. V. Lucas's "Open Road" (anthology).

[2] The title poem is remarkable for an unusually over-developed simile. The simile occupies two-thirds of the poem.

[3] To the reader who has followed us so far such pieces as "The White

—but both in the second series of "Songs from Vagabondia" published two years previously and in all the subsequent publications, the style is absolutely free from obscurity of any kind. The development, however, is not all gain, for although lucidity is doubtless an indispensable attribute of poetry at its best, it may be—and in Carman's case too often is— obtained by emptying poetry of many of its vital elements.

One does not grumble when, as is the case in the later sea-ballads and the poems of "Behind the Arras," the poet shifts his 'appeal' from the beauty of a series of striking lines and stanzas to that of a symbolic conception. A loss in one direction is balanced by a gain in another. When, however, as in the second[1] and third series of "Songs from Vagabondia," he casts his symbolism to the four winds of heaven, and makes little or no effort to give any compensation for the imaginative quality that it lent to the minutiæ of his verse, one has legitimate ground for complaint. Doubtless, the expression of the thought is clearer, but at the same time it has become more prosaic. Such stanzas as the following might well have been written by the veriest poetaster:—

> "The long noons turn the ribstons red,
> The pippins yellow,
> The wild duck from his reedy bed
> Summons his fellow."
>
> (At Michaelmas).

It is scarcely too much to say that nearly one-half of the poems

---

Gull," a fine elegy on Shelley, will offer little difficulty. "The Country of Har" is more obscure, or rather more confused.

[1] Carman's contribution:—

"A Vagabond Song."
"Wild Wood Lore."
"At Michaelmas."
"In a copy of Browning."
"At the Road-House."
"Lal of Kilrudden."
"Mr. Moon."

collected and published later under the title of "The Green Book of the Bards" are written in this facile and hopelessly banal manner. True, many of the lyrics are saved from absolute mediocrity by their thought and by something of the vagabondish verve and humour that made the success of the first series of "Songs from Vagabondia." They cannot, however, be considered as worthy samples of Carman's genius. In his ever-increasing desire to propagate his philosophy, Carman too often, at this period at least, lost sight of his art. It must not be inferred, however, that all the work of this period is of an inferior nature. The poet, if he produced much that is indifferent from an artistic point of view, produced also much that is good and even excellent. There are many nature poems of very decided charm; some interesting records of a holiday sojourn in the West Indies; and, best of all, one or two delightful lyrics owing their inspiration to the story of Pierrot.

The nature poems differ in many ways from those of "Low Tide on Grand Pré." In the earlier work the poet lent to the objects of nature only such emotions as Nature herself aroused in his soul; in these later lyrics the objects of nature, when endowed at all with sentient life, are frankly *humanized*. In one case the semblance of reality is maintained; in the other, it is almost entirely disregarded. When in "Low Tide" Carman spoke of the birds and flowers as his "fellow vagrants," one understood easily that it was not because he wished to endow them with human attributes, but because he wished to emphasize the fact that they, like himself and all other created things, were obedient to the "call" of Nature.[1] When, however, as in these poems, he makes natural objects give expression to purely human emotions and even to thoughts, one has no option other than to believe that Nature has become for him, artistically at least, the mere mouthpiece of his own soul. Unlike, as in "Low Tide," the poetic fallacy, to use the phrase of Ruskin, is obvious. Again,

[1] The migrant instinct and the creative impulse.

the charming habit manifested in the early volume of allowing his imaginative faculty free play over the objects of his environment, is rarely met with;[1] usually, the poems are conceived as artistic integers, a central thought or emotion being incarnated in images drawn from Nature.[2] Such a method of composition might easily, in the hands of a less observant or less artistic student of the American landscape, be productive of sheer banality. Carman has, however, the painter's eye, as well as the poet's heart. Such verses as those which open the lyric entitled "The Silent Wayfellow" are a real consolation for the vanished beauties of "Low Tide."

"To-day when the birches are yellow,
And red is the wayfaring tree,
Sit down in the sun, my soul,
And talk of yourself to me![3]

Here where the old blue rocks
Bask in the forest shine,
Dappled with shade and lost
In their reverie divine.

How goodly and sage they are!
Priests of the taciturn smile
Rebuking our babble and haste,
Yet loving us all the while.

In the asters the wild gold bees
Make a warm busy drone,
While our Mother at Autumn's door[4]
Sits warming her through to the bone." . . . .

1 One meets it to some extent in "Above the Gaspereau."

2 All such poems, for example, as "A Creature Catechism," "Sursum Corda," "Pictor Ignotus."

3 Compare: "The soul has memories of regions and lives of which we have never heard. The soul dwells with us tacitly as a silent companion who would share our habitation for years, yet never reveal the secrets of his earlier life." (The Kinship of Nature.)

4 Compare quotation on page 132.

Here, the description of "the old blue rocks" in the second and third verses is coloured by the poet's conception that in Autumn the soul has glimmerings of the country beyond the gateway of apparent death; but, if it be purely subjective, there can be no doubt as to its poetic appeal. Another poem,—and one that just misses greatness,—dealing with Nature in the same manner, although more deductively,[1] is "Above the Gaspereau." In this piece the poet gives us the train of thought that led him to the conclusion that death is but the door to a new and higher life.

It is early September, and the poet is in his hill-side garden, "half-way up the mountains from the purple sea." All is still. On the hill tops, like sentinels on the alert, stand the tall black firs, solemn and taciturn. In the valley beneath, the apple trees, laden with fruit, have hushed the rustle of their leaves. An air of expectancy is everywhere. "What is it? Who comes? What's abroad on the blue mountain-side?" queries the poet. Musingly, he lets his thoughts dwell upon the life of these silent children of Nature. What do the apple trees dream of? Not, certainly, of the life of man.

"Their life is their own, and the surge of it. All through the spring
They pushed forth their buds, and the rainbirds at twilight would sing.
They put forth their bloom, and the world was as fairy a thing
As a Japanese garden. Then midsummer came with a zing
And the clack of the locust; then fruit-time and coolness, to bring
This aftermath deep underfoot with its velvety spring.
And they all the while with their fatherly, motherly care
Taking sap from the ground, taking sun from the air,

1 The poet apparently deduces his ideas from the life of nature.

Taking chance of the frost and the worm, taking
courage to dare,
Have given their life that the life might be goodly and
fair
In their kind for seasons to come, with good witness to
bear
How the sturdy old race of the apples could give and
not spare,
To-morrow the harvest begins . . . . . ''

Does all this patient labour, this strenuous obedience to the impulse of spring, end but in the ruin of autumn? Does love, the desire to better the life of earth, lead but to winter and death? No, answers the poet; the joyous zeal with which Nature accomplishes her tasks and her calm, glad look as if of expectation when these tasks are fulfilled, preclude the sinister suggestion.

'' Ah, friend of mine over the sea, shall we not discern,
In the life of our brother the beech and our sister the fern,
As St. Francis would call them (his minorites, too, would
we learn!)
In death but a door to new being no creature may spurn,
But must enter for beauty's completion,—pass up in his turn
To the last round of joy, yours and mine, whence to think
and discern? ''

That this poem, the central idea of which we have given above, rises at times to splendid heights of poetry, it would be impious to deny. The stanza depicting the majestic unhaste of '' the dark-pointed firs ''[1] is full of the sombre grandeur of the Northern forest. Yet, on the other hand, there are passages of sheer bathos. To introduce in a poem dealing with such a subject, and dealing with it on the whole so worthily, such an intolerably prosaic line as '' You Londoner, walking in Bishopsgate, strolling the Strand,''[2] is to merit the pains of an artistic Inferno. Of

[1] See page 55.
[2] Unfortunately, it is not merely an affair of a line but an affair of several lines.

the defects in the diction and the rhymes we shall speak elsewhere. Still, despite its blemishes, the beauty of the poem is great; and where beauty is, one must not look with too carping an eye.

A variety of this method of putting his thoughts in the mouth of Nature, the poet uses very effectively in such lyrics as "Among the Aspens." Here, there is less pictorial description, —although often the epithets are suggestive,—the interest of the poems lying chiefly in the singular harmony of the thought or emotion with the natural objects chosen to express it. One has something of a dramatization of Nature often of a most delicate kind. "The Wind and the Tree," which we quote not because it is the best of these lyrics, but because it is the briefest, condenses into a couple of stanzas the tragi-comedy of the vagabond nature of man and the domestic nature of woman.

"The lover Wind is away, away,
Leaving a word with the lady Tree;
For his heart is out on the golden bay,
Trampling the perilous floor of sea.

The lady Tree from her lonely hill
Sends a sigh through the world to roam
The Wind's wild way at the Wind's sweet will;
But her heart abides at home, at home."

Such lines recall the "Fables of La Fontaine." A very piquant poem of more obvious inspiration is that bearing the title of "The Sceptics." Here, Carman, in the spirit of true Comedy,—that lovable goddess who holds up to ridicule the ugly vices that disfigure the life of man,—satirizes in the gentlest manner the grotesque conventionalities of what passes in our day for religious piety. At the risk of mutilating the poem, we give the first and last verses:—

"It was the little leaves beside the road.

Said Grass, " What is that sound
So dismally profound,
That detonates and desolates the air? "
" That is St. Peter's bell,"
Said the rain-wise Pimpernel;
" He is music to the godly,
Though he sounds to us so oddly,
And he terrifies the faithful unto prayer."

And something very like a groan
Escaped the naughty little leaves.
. . . . . .
Said Grass, " What is that noise
That startles and destroys
Our blessed summer brooding when we tired? "
" That's folk a-praising God,"
Said the tough old cynic Clod;
" They do it every Sunday,
They'll be all right on Monday;
It's just a little habit they've acquired."

And laughter spread among the little leaves."

There is, we must remark again, no attack on religion in the above lines. We refer those who feel inclined to doubt our statement to the poems, " St. Bartholomew's on the Hill " and " The Church of the Leaves,"[1] where they will see clearly that if

[1] One can hardly have unremarked the conception, in this poem, of the "immanent Christ."

". . . . he who walked with the world-soul
At twilight in Gethsemane,
Breathing among the listening boughs
Sweet prayers of charity,

Must daily with the wind return
About the dim world, to renew
The trembling litanies of leaves,
The blessings of the dew.

He must revive with wind-sweet voice
The gospel hardly known to flesh,

Carman be not orthodox in his views, he is at least, as the saying goes, very much "on the side of the Angels."

In all the poems we have quoted from in this chapter, it will have been noticed, the tendency of the poet's art (as distinct from his thought) is, as we pointed out, towards "de-spiritualization" of Nature, if one may use the term. It no longer gives us the impression that Nature has a soul *of her own*, despite the invariable harmony that exists between the thought incarnated in an object of Nature and the outward guise of that object. A further development of this de-spiritualizing process (we are speaking of the poet's art, let us repeat, and not of his thought) is noticeable in the poems of "A Winter's Holiday." In these poems the artistic treatment of Nature is almost completely pictorial.[1] Take these lines from "Bahaman":—

"Loveliest of the Lucayas, peace be yours till time be done!
In the gray North I shall see you, with your white streets in the sun,
Old pink walls and purple gateways, where the lizards bask and run.
. . . . . .

Till the same spirit speaks again,
Interpreting afresh. . . . . .

For still he walks these shadowy aisles,
Dreaming of beauties still to be,
More manly than our manliest,
Whose thought and love were free.

The pines are all his organ pipes,
And the great rivers are his choir;
And creatures of the field and tide
That reck not, yet aspire.

Our brothers of the tardy hope,
Put for their strength in senses dim,
Treading the vast, they know not why,
Through æons up to him. . . ."

1 There are pictorial passages in the early poems but they are rarely merely pictorial.

Far from stress and storm for ever, dream behind your
jalousies,
While the long white lines of breakers crumble on your
reefs and keys,
And the crimson oleanders burn against the peacock seas.

With the exception of "The Songs of the Sea Children," in which the artistic treatment of Nature is very much the same as that we have exemplified by quotations from "A Silent Wayfellow" and "Above the Gaspereau," all the more recent[1] books of Carman deal with Nature in this pictorial manner.

The last poems of what is evidently a period of transition that we intend to deal with, are one or two pieces afterwards included amongst much inferior work in the section of the Collected Poems entitled "The Book of Pierrot." These lyrics which breathe the atmosphere of an idealized Montmartre,—they owe their inspiration apparently to the poet's sojourn in Paris,—must be classed among the very finest things that Carman has written. In form, in thought, and above all in atmosphere, they are as near perfection as is humanly possible. "The Paper Moon," with its delicate landscape painting, its exquisitely suggestive fourth and fifth verses,[2] its deep sense of the enchantment of a summer's night, and, lastly, its varied and haunting melody, is a masterpiece of its kind. No doubt, this kind is not of the highest, but what of that? Better ten thousand times a perfect pearl than a faulty diamond! To omit the following verses in compiling an anthology of Carman's best work,—such a delightful and, let us add, necessary task has yet to be undertaken,—would be more than a blunder, it would be a crime:—

"The moon like a paper lantern
Is lifted over the hill,

---

1 We refer to the general treatment in such books as "The Pipes of Pan," "Sappho," "The Rough Rider."

2 The fifth verse recalls in a wholly pleasing manner the "Evelyn Hope" of Robert Browning.

And below in the silent valley
Even the aspens are still.

Wondrous and frail it rises
Over the painted firs,
While down in the piney stillness
Only the river stirs.

Lulling its peaceful orchards
Murmurs the meadowy stream,
Threading the purple landscape
Like a silver road in a dream.

And I fancy the great Allmother
Is wandering, lamp in hand,
Distilling the night's enchantment
From her blue garden land;

Where a thousand Junes have perished
To make one perfect rose,
A thousand beauties taken
The journey no man knows;

Where a thousand perfect lovers
Have smiled and gone to sleep
With only a kiss to remember,
And only a rose to keep.

O great mysterious Mother,
In whose calm face we smile,
Swing low thy paper lantern,
Stay not our joys a while!

For to-night through this Northern garden,
Where the yellow roses twine,
Wander thy maiden lovers,
Pierrot and Columbine."

"At Columbine's Grave" is another beautiful piece of work. In

it the optimism of the poet is depicted as suffering the most severe of all tests,—that of the aching loneliness of departed love. Does it, from the reader's point of view, come well through the ordeal? It is doubtful. Certainly there are few ordinary men who are capable of obtaining in such crises much consolation from the thought of the last two stanzas.[1] The 'appeal' of the opening verses is to the many; that of the concluding to the few. This said, however,—and we imply no stricture on the beauty of the lyric in saying it,—there will be none who will not be profoundly grateful for such moving lines as these:—

"Ah, Pierrot,
Where is thy Columbine?
What vandal could untwine
That gay rose-rope of thine,
And spill thy joy like wine,
Poor Pierrot?

Ah, Pierrot,
The moon is rising red
Above thy grief-bowed head;
Thy roses are all shed.
And Columbine is dead!
Poor Pierrot.

. . . . . .

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[1] One has the same thought in "Decoration Day." (The Rough Rider.)

"And you, O fond and unforgetful ones
Who have no grave to tend for all your loss,
No sacred spot whereat your love may kneel,
But must in silence let the proud tears spring,
Keeping the lonely vigil of the heart,
While the flags flutter and the dead-march plays;

. . . . take courage, seeing all natural things
Are not left desolate, but the lovely earth
Transmutes each scar and sorrow to her gain,
And from the flux of time and growth renews
Her seasons of indomitable joy,
And breeds no beauty each reviving year."

Ah, Pierrot,
Is there not one sweet word
Of brook or breeze or bird
A mortal ever heard,
Could cheer thee—not one word,
Poor Pierrot?

Ah, Pierrot,
Thy loving tears in vain
Shall fall like quiet rain
For her; till the stars wane,
She will not come again,
Poor Pierrot!

Yet, Pierrot,
The mighty Mother now
Hath her in care somehow.
Listen, and clear that brow:—
"O earthling, grieve not thou,
Poor Pierrot!

Ah, Pierrot,
Here on my cool green floor
I do transmute, restore,
All things once fair before
To beauty more and more,
Poor Pierrot!"

None of the other lyrics of the "Book," with perhaps the single exception of "The Last Room," approach anywhere near the beauty of these two. Some are too serious in thought—too obviously serious, rather,—and others too "Nature-loving" in spirit, to be quite in keeping with the traditional character of Pierrot. The necessary touch of artificiality is only to be found in "The Paper Moon."

Before taking leave of these poems,[1] it behoves us to

[1] Perhaps one ought to include the lyric "Overlord" in this chapter. It was published, however, among the classical pieces of "The Pipes of Pan."

endeavour to find some reasonable explanation for the very radical changes in the poet's manner which we have noted in this chapter. Let us deal first with two of these changes together: the gradual clarification of the poet's utterance and the tendency to interpret Nature in terms of personal thought and emotion. The cause of these two changes in manner is not far to seek. It lies in the ever-increasing conscious or unconscious desire of the poet to offer to the world the consolations of his philosophy. After the poems of "Beside the Aurelian Well," and to some extent in these also, all the work of Carman is more or less permeated with systematic thought, many pieces being, as witness "Christmas Eve at St. Kavin's," which was written during the

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The poem is one of the best of its kind.

"Lord of the grass and hill,
Lord of the rain,
White Overlord of will,
Master of Pain,

I, who am dust and air
Blown through the halls of death,
Like a pale ghost of prayer,—
I am thy breath.

Lord of the blade and leaf,
Lord of the bloom,
Sheer Overlord of grief,
Master of doom,

Lonely as wind or snow,
Through the vague world and dim,
Vagrant and glad I go;
I am thy whim.

Lord of the storm and lull,
Lord of the sea,
I am thy broken gull,
Blown far alee.

Lord of the harvest dew,
Lord of the dawn,
Star of the paling blue
Darkling and gone,

Lost on the mountain height
Where the first winds are stirred,
Out of the wells of night
I am thy word. . . ."

period we have just dealt with, even distinctly didactic in tone. It is evident that under the combined influences of the "philosopher" and the "humanitarian," the "poet" has gradually evolved the species of classical art defined in "The Poetry of Life": "Art is that lovely corporeal body with which man endows the spirit of goodness and the thought of truth." For "spirit of goodness and thought of truth" one must read, in the case of Carman, the doctrine of "unitrinianism," for that doctrine contains the highest conceptions of the poet in the domains of morality and science. We do not mean, of course,—let us repeat,—that Carman goes about seeking artistic apparel in which to clothe his philosophy. It is the loveliness of the corporeal body which suggests his thought and not *vice-versa*. Still, it is true, that beauty in calling into action the highest powers of his nature, always, or nearly so, awakes in the poet a "unitrinian" conception, for his creed is the heart of his character and beats as a pulse in all his activities.

The cause of the poet's adoption in most of his later work of a pictorial treatment of Nature is not so easily discovered. One might suggest that, in the poems where such treatment is found, Nature is used mainly as embellishment, the primary interest being, from the poet's point of view, in the significance of the emotion and thought. This is true enough, but hardly adequate, without the totally unwarrantable assumption that the possession of a philosophy has rendered the poet insensible to "spiritual" charms of Nature, to explain the change of manner from the poems of "Low Tide," where also in some instances Nature is not the main theme. A better explanation, in our opinion, may be found in examining the kind of pictorial description to be met with in the poems. This description is realistic, but it is something more: it is "the vision not the view." It is true to life as we say, that is, there is nothing fantastic about it; but, at the same time, all that is unsightly has been removed. Having noted this fact, let us turn to "Bahaman," the *first* poem, in which Nature is so described. In it one finds the lines:—

" This alone is art's ambition, to arrest with form and hue,
Dominant ungrasped ideals, known to credence, hid from view,
In a mimic of creation,—to the life but fairer too,—

Where the soul may take her pleasure, contemplate perfection's plan,
And returning bring the tidings of his heritage to man,—. . .'

Thus we see that, here also, the change of manner is due to the growing influence of the " moralist," or, if one prefers it, " humanitarian " over the " poet."[1] Everywhere, Carman gives ever plainer evidence of his desire to teach; and, if less obvious than his other methods of instruction, the employment of pictorial description is nevertheless a means to the same end. With such a method, however, we have no fault to find. If covertly didactic, it is at the same time thoroughly artistic. Whether a poet aims at creating beauty with a view to bettering the life of earth, or whether he aims at creating it for its own sake, does not greatly matter; what does matter is that he aims at creating beauty and at creating beauty alone.

[1] In his essay on " The Purpose of Poetry " (The Poetry of Life), Carman gives his reasons for believing that " it is the business of literature, as of all arts, to create an illusion to project upon the imagination a mimic world, true to life, as we say, and at the same time more goodly and fair than the actual one we know." The first of these reasons is that " we turn for sympathy to art, for recreation and refreshment, for solace and inspiration. We ask to find in it, ready to hand, those helpful and pleasant qualities which are so hard to find in real life." The second is that " the world is by no means perfect, but it is always tending towards perfection, and it is our business to help that tendency."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CLASSICAL POEMS.

THE tendency of Carman to regard art as the lovely corporeal body with which man endows the spirit of goodness and the thought of truth,—one must ask pardon for repeating the definition,—found its natural consummation[1] in a number of poems in which classical themes are treated as a medium of expression for the poet's ideas. These poems, which were published in the volumes, "From the Book of Myths," "Sappho," and "From the Book of Valentines," differ but little in thought from those that immediately precede them, but on the whole, and especially those of the two last-mentioned books, show a very decided improvement in form. In the poems of "From the Book of Myths" there is still a good deal of the too facile writing that marred the lyrics of "From the Green Book of the Bards," but there is also much that is almost perfect in finish, and worthy to be placed beside the carefully polished stanzas of the "Sappho" lyrics. Carman, in these latter, is a very different Carman from the natural artist of "Low Tide on Grand Pré," but if less ingenuous he shows himself again none the less a true artist,—a master of the inevitable word and the haunting phrase.

The poems of "From the Book of Myths" centre for the most part around the legend of Pan and Syrinx, which forms the theme of the first poem. This piece, which bears the title of "The Pipes of Pan,"[2] falls easily into three divisions: Firstly,

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[1] One must remember that Carman is a fine classical scholar and that a didactic treatment of classical themes is by no means of rare occurrence in American poetry. A good example of such treatment may be found in Lowell's "Rhoecus."

[2] "The Pipes of Pan" was also the name given by the poet to a volume of poetry containing the four books: "From the Green Book of the Bards,"

we have the origin of the pipes.

Pan pursues Syrinx, who eludes him and vanishes among the reeds. To ease the pangs of his love-passion the wood-god blindly draws a reed, cuts and fashions it, and puts it to his lips. The music that issues from the rude instrument causes a subtle change to come over him; slowly his anger and grief pass away and give place to new and more beneficent emotions. (The change is in reality due to the inspiration of Syrinx, who lurks, as it were, in the heart of the reed). The god becomes conscious of the solace of giving vent to his longing for beauty, and is filled with the desire to find

> "... the perfect form and fashion
> For the elemental passion."

Secondly, we have a deepening of the signification of the myth.

Pan becomes the Soul of the World, which in all things and through all things is ever endeavouring to give lovely guise to its desire for perfection (Syrinx). This spirit, which lends music and colour to the life of Nature is never forgetful of its purpose.

> "Think you Pan forgets the tune
> Learned beneath the slim new moon,
> When these throbbings all were blent
> To the dominant intent?"

Thirdly, and lastly, we have the explanation of the spell that Nature casts over us, and a means offered us by the poet whereby we may regain our heritage in her dominion of joy.

Love,—there is the first and last word of creation. The pipes of the wood-god charm us because of the love that thrills through them, and it is only by attuning ourselves to their music

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"Song from a Northern Garden," "From the Book of Myths," "Songs of the Sea Children."

and letting loose the love in our hearts in a like manner that happiness can be obtained and beauty be brought to birth.

On the whole, although there are some fine passages and an occasional image such as that describing the coming of love,

> "When, upon his race with death
> Life, the runner halts for breath,
> Taking with a happy cry
> His brief draught of ecstasy,"

which arrests and delights the reader, the poem fails to arouse any great degree of poetic enthusiasm. Its artistic defects are numerous and too often of an obvious nature. In the first place, in his desire to re-interpret the old Greek myth in the terms of his philosophy, the poet forgets at times the traditional character of his hero. Whatever vices he may have possessed, the wood-god certainly was always far removed from the American "hustler" that the following couplet would seem to depict:—

> "I could strive no more for gain;
> Being was my true domain,—"

In the second, the short trochaic lines arranged in couplets, which were evidently intended to convey, or rather suggest, the impression of the magic piping, are apt to degenerate into mere jingle. No doubt this is due in part to the measure itself which, as Professor Lewis points out, is unsuitable to poems of any length, but at the same time it must also be admitted that in places the poet can hardly be wholly exonerated. Such a couplet as this with its glaring "cheville" is unpardonable:—

> "Pale tree cricket with his bell
> Ringing ceaselessly and well."

In the third place, the onomatopoetic effects are in one comparatively long passage decidedly cacophonous:—

> "Chir and gurgle, bark and cry,
> Bleat, hum, twitter, coo and sigh,

Mew and belling, hoot and bay,
Clack and chirrup, croak and neigh,
Whoof and cackle, whine and creak,
Honk and chatter, caw and squeak;
Wolf and eagle, mink and moose,
Each for his own joyous use
Uttering the heart's desire
As the season bade aspire; . . . ."

There may be some who are able to find poetry in this sort of thing; for our own part we can only confess to a profound astonishment at finding it in Carman's work.

Of the minor defects of the poem, one must be pointed out, not because it in any way detracts from the beauty of the piece considered by itself, but because it somewhat spoils the work for a reader who is already acquainted with Carman's previous verse. We refer to the poet's inclination to repeat himself. Compare the following passages:—

" Come into the woods once more;
Leave the fire and close the door;
. . . . . .
Though the world should lay a finger
On your arm to bid you linger,
Ye shall neither halt nor tarry
(Little be the load ye carry!)
When ye hear the pipes of Pan
Shrilling and pleading in the van."
(The Pipes of Pan).

" Leave the latch-string in the door,
And the pile of logs to burn;
Others may be here before
I have leisure to return.

Few enough have been my needs;
Fewer now they are to be;

Where the faintest follow leads,
There is heart's content for me."
(At the Yellow of the Leaf).

Without suggesting that the defect is particularly flagrant in the above example, we must utter at least a mild protest against the pedagogic device of driving home a precept by force of repetition. As early as the first series of "Songs from Vagabondia," the poet spoke of the joys of vagabondage "for him who travels without a load"; he expressed the same idea in "The Word at St. Kavins"; a sententious repetition in "The Pipes of Pan" were surely unnecessary.

The poem entitled "Syrinx" develops the idea that Pan (or the World Spirit) in freeing his love in forms of beauty is inspired by the ideal which lives as potency in the vehicle of his art.

"I, who am the breath of grasses and the soul of summer's dream,
Once was Syrinx, whom a great god love and lost and made the theme

Of his mournful minor music. Nay, I who had worn the guise
Which allured him, yet eluded, vanishing before his eyes,
When his heart held lonely commune, taking counsel to devise

Some new solace for sad lovers that should give the spirit vent,
Lovelier than speech of mortals where the stricken soul is pent
And the longing gropes for language large enough for beauty's bent;

When he drew the reeds and ranged them, rank by rank from low to shrill,
Bound them with the flax together—I was inspiration still,
I was heartache crying through them, I was echo on the hill."

Such lines possess a certain charm. When, however, the poet goes on to describe the spell cast by music over the peoples of different lands, he ends by giving a kind of poetical geography lesson very much after the manner of his French Canadian predecessor, Octave Crémazie. Syrinx was the inspiration of the pipes played upon by Sicilian shepherds, Egyptian courtisans, Byzantine youths, Babylonian lovers, Bithynian flute-boys, Ionian maids, Peruvian serenaders, Winnebago Indians, Malayans, Sumatrans, Marquesans, and, finally,

"Chukma, Dyah, Mahalaka, Papuan and Ashanti,
Hillmen from the Indian snows, canoemen from the Carib sea . . . . ."

Towards the end of the poem, Carman finds himself again. As it stands, however, the piece would require to be cut down by at least a half to be made tolerable.

"Marsyas" which develops the lines of "The Pipes of Pan,"

"For the music of the earth,
. . . . . .
Means that wisdom lurks behind
The enchantment of the mind,"

(Athene takes the place of Pan) is a very much better piece of work. Such a beautiful passage of classical description as that of the fourth stanza is not to be met with in either of the poems we have just examined. Marsyas heard the flute of the goddess,

"And he followed. Heart of wonder, how the keen blue smoke upcurled
From the shepherd huts to heaven! How the dew lay silver-pearled
Where sleek-sided cattle wandered through the morning of the world."

"The Magic Flute," another variation of the same theme,—the mythology is, however, drawn this time from Egypt,—rises to a still higher level of beauty. The legend is well narrated, while the passages which interpret it are often full of poetic power.

All these poems, however, take a very secondry place when compared with the four pieces that are to be found at the end of the book; "Daphne," "Hylas," "The Dead Faun," and "At Phœdra's Tomb." The first mentioned lyric which treats of the craving of the poet for the Ideal Beauty (Daphne) of which nature gives but broken glimpses, is certainly worthy to be placed among Carman's best work.[1] In it, as in the other pieces we have just referred to, there is not a superfluous line,—an artist quality that is sadly lacking in such productions as "Syrinx." The lyric is unfortunately too long to quote here, and, rather than spoil it by giving excerpts, we cite the classical lines of "Hylas," a well-turned work of art for which we have a very decided liking.

"Cool were the gray mottled beeches,
Quiet with noon were the fern-beds,
Where by the bubbling spring water
Tarried young Hylas,

Whistling a song of the rowers,
Dipping his jar till it gurgled,
Suddenly there the bright naiads
(Woe to thee, Hylas!)

Looked and beheld his fair beauty
Better their well-head, and straightway
Exquisite longing possessed them
Only for Hylas.

When he returned not at sundown,
"Over long," said his companions,
As slow dismay came upon them,
"Tarries young Hylas."

Never again did his comrades
Find the lost rower, nor maidens

[1] The poem is given in E. V. Lucas' "Open Road."

See from their doorways at twilight
Home-coming Hylas.
. . . . . .

Yet even now, when the spring time
Verdures the valley, and rain-winds
Voyage for lands undiscovered,
As once did Hylas,

With a great star on the hill-crest
In purple evening, a flute-note
Pierces the dusk, and a voice calls,
"Hylas, Hylas!"

Here, the touch of symbolism[1] at the end of the lyric adds decidedly to its charm; the "poet" dominates wholly the "philosopher," and one hears once more the welcome voice of true inspiration. This voice is heard again in "The Dead Faun." Although a covert didacticism is noticeable here and there, the subject is treated for its own beauty and not as a mere cloak for the disseminating ethical theories. Not that, as we have said before, we have any great objection to such theories being incarnated in literature,—although art with a didactic purpose can never be free,—but we must insist on the incontestable fact that the function of any artist is first of all to create beauty, and that, in consequence, he must regard everything else as of minor importance. One has but to contrast the pedagogic outbursts of the poems we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—and, unfortunately, they are frequent enough elsewhere—with the following stanzas from "The Dead Faun," to perceive that it is only when Carman ceases to be a teacher he reveals the genius which is so unquestionably his.

"Who has done this thing? What wonder is this that lies
On the green earth so still under purple skies,

[1] Hylas becomes almost symbolical of the vernal desire for beauty.

Like a hyacinth shaft the careless mower has cut
And thought of no more?

. . . . . .

Who hath wrought this pitiful wrong on the lovely earth?
What ruthless hand could ruin that harmless mirth?
O heart of things, what undoing is here, never now
To be mended more!

No more, O beautiful boy, shall thy fleet feet stray
Through the cool beech wood on the shadowy mountain way,
Nor halt by the well at noon, nor trample the flowers
On the forest floor.

. . . . . .

The sensitive ears that knew all the speech of the wood,
Every call of the birds and the creatures, and understood
What the wind to the water said, what the river replied,
Shall hear no more.

. . . . . .

Who has trammelled those feet that never again shall rove?
Who has bound those hands that never again shall move?
Who has quenched the lamp in those eyes that never again
Shall be lighted more?

. . . . . .

He was fair as a mortal and spiritual as a flower;
He knew no hate, but was happy within the hour.
The gods had given him beauty and freedom and joy,
Could they give no more?

Is all their wisdom and power so fond a thing?
Must he perish, nor ever return with returning spring,
But be left like a dead-ripe fruit for a stranger
To find and deplore?

. . . . . .

The reverberant thrushes may peal from the hemlock glooms,
The summer clouds be woven on azure looms;
He is done with all the lovely things of earth forever
And ever more."

The " Sappho " lyrics and the classical poems of " From the Book of Valentines "—not to mention a few charming pieces in the " Songs from a Northern Garden,"—show that the work of "From the Book of Myths" was largely tentative and immature. The facile banality and blatant didacticism of the latter are left far behind; the style has grown more studied, and the music richer and more varied. Of the " Valentines " we need say little, although that little must be frankly on the side of eulogy. The poems offer us nothing new in the way of thought, but in emotional appeal and in graciousness of rhythm they are vastly superior to such productions as " Syrinx " and " The Pipes of Pan." Unlike, however, the " Sappho " lyrics which were published before them, they are somewhat lacking in imaginative qualities, and, although their sonorous lines are impressing at the first reading, they are not the kind of work that lingers in the memory. Still if they never rise to a very high level of poetry, they never sink into mere commonplace. None of them equal the best work of " From the Book of the Myths," and none of them imitate the bathos of the worst. " A Letter from Lesbos," with its pleasing alternation of trochaic and iambic passages, is perhaps the most striking poem.

A detached piece, " A Vision of Sappho," forms artistically, if not chronologically, the prelude to the " Sappho " lyrics. Whether or not, as certain lines in it would seem to suggest, the poet was at the time of its composition either meditating or executing the project of restoring the lost songs, does not greatly matter; the " Vision " is in any case interesting as giving us an insight into his conception of

> " Love's priestess, mad with pain and joy of song,
> Song's priestess, mad *with* joy and pain of love,"

and is, besides, in itself a very delightful piece of work. Let us turn to it.

The poem opens with a passage that is at once conversational

and poetic. "Were you storm-bound here within the Ghost House?" observes the poet,

> "Caught abroad and seeking sudden shelter
> On this rainy afternoon in August,
> (Shelley's birthday marks the date exactly),
> As I set a chair and bid you welcome,
> While the wood fire crackles on the hearthstone
> And the rain makes music on the shingles,
>
> You would see the mountain smoke with storm-clouds,
> Driving mists come up the clove, and ghostly
> Wraiths of rain walk in the purple valley,
> Furtively the hill-fog through the beeches
> Steals in silence, enters at the window,
> Shuts the world out, and mysterious stillness
> Bids the soul prepare for revelation."

The description is vivid, and more than usually attractive! A step from the door-way, suggests the poet, may be early Greece—what is time or distance with the outer world concealed from us? It it a wood-thrush or Pan that is piping? Who can say? Likely enough the latter!

> "Must we to believe behold the presence,—
> Doubt the song until we see the singer?"

Let us imagine what the heart bids us!

> "So upon the wish we are in Hellas,
> In the purple hills and it is summer,
> The wind wanders through the groves of ilex;
> There are sounds of birds and falling water;
> The leaves whisper full of wind and shadow;
> That red road in the ravine below us
> Leads the travelling eye through fields of mallow,
> Seeding grass and flame-bright oleander,
> Down the meadowy country to the seaboard,

Where the breakers beat their crooning rhythms
On the yellow sand. That phantom city,
White and small against the purple distance,
With her looming walls and spars and towers
Gleaming in the sun is Mitylene.''[1]

Glowingly, the poet takes us down into the city and leads us through the streets crowded with Lesbian women, shopping or returning from the Summer Festival. Amid the bustle and the chatter ("they were human long ago in Lesbos!) suddenly he catches our arm.

"Quickly,
Look before she passes that next corner!
Not so tall as you; an Oriental,
Slim and dark; the blue-black hair that crinkles,
Knotted at the neck; the smouldering crimson
Mounting through the cheek's transparent tawny;
And the earth-brown eyes that glow and darkle; . . . .

Sappho's very self! . . . .

Is not that enough for one day's outing?"

We have purposely refrained until now from dealing with the poem in its relation to the "Sappho" lyrics, in order to give some faint idea of its charm. The insight, however, that it gives into the motives that prompted Carman to undertake the task of 'restoring' the work of the Lesbian poetess must not be lightly disregarded. The Canadian poet is not one of those who believe in the doctrine of art for art's sake, and consequently one is apt to be rather surprised at first at finding him employing his energies on such a work. Let us begin by examining the description he gives us of the inhabitants of Lesbos. In Mitylene, he says:—

[1] All this gives the impression of having been actually seen. Whether or not the poet's European trip extended to Greece, we do not know. He may, of course, have simply reconstituted the picture from his reading with the aid of engravings, etc.

". . . . . a people very like us moderns
Wrought and triumphed, joyed and suffered,
On the way to welfare or misfortune;
Dreamed the dream of youth through soft spring twilights
With their sweet uncomprehended longings;
Felt earth's incommunicable sadness
In the destiny of all things mortal;
And beheld through sunsets o'er the sea-rim
Sails come in with stories of strange marvels,
Foreign folk and peril and adventure;
Curious about the world as children,
Always mooting some unanswered question;
Took their pleasure; prospered, travelled, traded;
Gave this life for beauty and repined not;
Thanked the gods and passed and were forgotten,
Leaving to the careless years a treasure
Unsurpassed in lyric or in marble,
To bear witness how eternal passion
Sought in art what life could hardly furnish,
Forms supreme for spirit's habitation,
When the rosy heat of life was glowing
In the crucible of clay. . . . . ."

Now, without accusing Carman of misrepresenting the Lesbian character,—his description agrees with that given by such classical scholars as J. A. Symonds,—we would point out that the traits of this character which he emphasizes are precisely those that, as it were, incarnate his philosophy. The sense culture of the Lesbians, their glowing emotions and inquisitive minds, their love of adventure, and their carelessness of the morrow, all these exemplify his theory of conduct. One may, then, at the outset, presume that Sappho, as the greatest of the Lesbians, interested Carman not merely as an incomparable artist, but also as something in the nature of a moral ideal. The vexed question of the virtue of the Lesbian poetess in no way invalidates our theory;

one whose life is inspired by a passion for the beautiful cannot, the poet believes, be otherwise than virtuous.[1]

> "If the artist were ungodly
> Prurient of mind and heart,
> I must think they argue oddly
> Who make shrines before his art."
> (Raphael).

On the other hand, evidence that would seem to support our hypothesis is not lacking. In the first place, the poem we have just examined is, like all the rest of Carman's later work, permeated by a covert didacticism.[2] Here is what may be called "the moral" of the Vision:—

> "Only heed the lyric moment!
> Let no yesterday and no to-morrow
> Mar the fine perfection of the present
> With regret or longing. Make the hour
> All sufficient, full and fine and joyous.
> Let mere gladness in the fleeting instant
> Do away regret and anxious forethought,
> Every task the better thus accomplished
> For the undivided spirit's rapture. . . ."

Which is, as one might say, good Lesbian and good Carman.[3] In the portrait, again, that the poet gives of Sappho, one notices several traits which suggest the former's ideal of culture. One has "the pure-toned speech,"[4] "the lithe step free from throat to shoulder,"[5] the "laughing and delicious fervour," and, lastly,

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1 Whether or not one is justified in using the word in its conventional sense, we do not know.

2 Unlike, however, some of the poems of "From the Book of Myths," it is thoroughly artistic.

3 Compare the ninth stanza of "On Ponus Ridge." (The Rough Rider.)

4 5 See "Extract from Address at Moonshine." Appendix iii.

"the earth-brown eyes."[1] Turning to the "Sappho" lyrics themselves, the evidence becomes still more conclusive. What could be more "unitrinian" in thought than the following lines?

"Great Pan came to thy cradle
With the calm of the deepest hills,
And smiled, 'They have forgotten
The veriest power of life.'"

"To kindle her shapely beauty,
To illumine her mind withal,
I give to the little person
The glowing and craving soul."
(vii).

"The gods themselves and the almightier fates
Cannot avail to harm

With outward and misfortunate chance
The radiant unshaken mind of him
Who at his being's centre will abide,[2]
Secure from doubt and fear."
(lviii).

"The fortunate hour is on the dial now.

To-day be wise and great,
And put off hesitation and go forth
With cheerful courage for the diurnal need.

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[1] Compare:—
"I watched her earth-brown eyes grow glad
Because the round day was so fair . . . ."
(The Eavesdropper.)
The poet is speaking of his beloved.

[2] "It is not the province of the soul to labour. Its proper office is to exist, to be and enjoy, to sorrow if it must, to rejoice when it can, to direct, order, and govern. . . . Look at this workman in a machine-shop. The belts are whirring and the cogs roaring all around him. . . . You would say that repose in such a place were impossible. And yet he goes about his work with a quiet pleasure, with a poise and deliberation, that show he has learned the secret of work and repose. . . . You perceive that at the centre of his being there is calm. He has learned to possess his soul."
(The Kinship of Nature.)

Stout be the heart, nor slow
The foot to follow the impetuous will,
Nor the hand slack upon the loom of deeds. . . . ''
(lxxii).

When, in conjunction with all this, one finds Sappho filled with the urge and desire of Spring (xcvi, xcvii, xcviii, xcix), one has but little hesitation in affirming that the Lesbian poetess represents Carman's moral ideal, or, if it be preferred, an incarnation of his philosophy of life. Let this be said, however, if the ''Sappho'' exemplify the poet's theories, it never transparently preaches them. The lyrics belong to the domain of art and not to that of moral philosophy.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that in writing the '' Sappho '' lyrics Carman seems to have been imbued with a sincere desire to restore as far as possible the work of the Grecian singer. '' Perhaps the most perilous and the most alluring venture in the whole field of poetry,'' says C. G. D. Roberts in the preface to the volume, '' is that which Mr. Carman has undertaken in attempting to give us in English verse those lost poems of Sappho, of which fragments have survived. The task is obviously not one of translation or of paraphrasing, but of imaginative and, at the same time, interpretive, construction. It is as if a sculptor of to-day were to set himself, with reverence, and trained craftmanship, and studious familiarity with the spirit, technique, and atmosphere of his subject, to restore some statues of Polyclitus or Praxiteles of which he had but a broken arm, a foot, a knee, a finger upon which to build.'' Without calling into question the accuracy of Mr. Roberts' simile, we feel inclined to doubt if a modern sculptor would undertake any such task without at least some fairly definite conception of the statue to be restored. In the case of the Sappho fragments, the themes of the lyrics to which they belong are for the most part wildly conjectural. Suppose the work of Shelley lost all but a few lines, and a poet in the dim future endeavouring to reconstruct '' To a Skylark '' from say,

"Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower. . . ."

and the futility of the whole business becomes patent. The temperament of Carman may, it is true,—although it is most unlikely,—be the same as that of Sappho; but even then the task of "restoring" the latter's work *in America*[1] can scarcely be taken seriously. Whilst, therefore, giving a few examples of the poet's reconstructive method, we must hold to the opinion that the lyrics stand or fall on their own merits.[2]

Although Carman has not woven all the fragments of the Sapphic poems into his lyrics, he has at least drawn liberally from them. One misses, somewhat to one's surprise, the lines "Hadst thou felt desire for things good or noble, and had not thy tongue framed some evil speech, shame had not filled thine eyes, but thou hadst spoken honestly about it,"[3] and one finds "Or Cyprus and Paphos, or Panormus (holds) thee," but as a rule the fragments are well chosen and the reconstructed songs almost invariably works of art.

Nos. V and VI of the lyrics are translations of the two odes of Sappho which have come down to us in something approaching their pristine form. Neither of these translations, although couched in classical metre with ease and finish, are particularly convincing. Were the poems in reality Sappho's, the Lesbian would have some difficulty in gaining the ear of the English public. Without wishing to be carping, we must say that in No. V we find the opening lines

"O Aphrodite
God-born and deathless . . . ."

somewhat insipid in comparison with Mr. Wharton's "Immortal

---

[1] In a different environment.

[2] We except, of course, Carman's translations of the two surviving odes.

[3] Here, as elsewhere in our analysis of the "Sappho," we use Mr. Wharton's translation.

Aphrodite of the broidered throne, daughter of Zeus, weaver of wiles . . . ." In No. VI we prefer the last two stanzas, and they are Carman's own. No. X, which like No. LXIII, turns a fragment into a lyrical unity, pleases us much better. The effect of the mingling of classical lines with a dactylic basis, with typically English iambic lines, is decidedly caressing to the ear.

> " Let there be garlands, Dica,
> Around thy lovely hair,
> And supple sprays of blossom
> Twined by thy soft hands.
>
> Whoso is crowned with flowers
> Has favour with the gods,
> Who have no kindly eyes
> For the ungarlanded."

Coming to the lyrics, which are, as it were, woven round shreds of Sappho's song, we would make special mention of No. XXXVII, a poem in which a Sapphic image is used in a truly masterly manner. Rarely have we read a stanza where the details are so beautifully blended:—

> " There we heard the breath among the grasses
> And the gurgle of soft-running water,
> Well contented with the spacious starlight,
> To cool wind's touch and the deep blue distance,
> Till the dawn came in with golden sandals."[1]

Almost equally delightful is No. XXX. The last two lines are, however, although not inharmonious with the Sapphic image, typically " Carmanesque."

> " Love shakes my soul, like a mountain wind
> Falling upon the trees,[2]

---

[1] " Me just now the golden-sandalled dawn. . . ."

[2] " Now Eros shakes my soul, a wind on the mountain falling on the oaks."

When they are swayed and whitened and bowed
As the great gusts will.

. . . . . .

Ah, timid Syrinx, do I not know
Thy tremor of sweet fear?
For a beautiful and imperious player
Is the lord of life."

The development of the fragment, "As the sweet apple blushes on the end of the bough, the very end of the bough, which the gatherers overlooked, nay, overlooked not but could not reach, . ." in No. LIII is another felicitous inspiration.

"Art thou the topmost apple
The gatherers could not reach,[1]
Reddening on the bough?
Shall I not take thee?

Art thou a hyacinth blossom
The shepherds upon the hills
Have trodden into the ground?
Shall I not lift thee?

Free is the young God Eros,
Paying no tribute to power,
Seeing no evil in beauty,
Full of compassion.

Once having found the beloved,
However sorry or woeful,
However scornful of loving,
Little it matters."

No. XVI, if less languorous, less voluptuous in atmosphere than the fragment with its magical "slumber streams from the quiver-

1 "As the sweet apple blushes on the end of the bough, the very end of the bough, which the gatherers overlooked, nay overlooked not but could not reach."

ing leaves," is none the less an exquisite snatch. The "enjambement" in the second line of the first stanza is unusually effective.

> "In the apple boughs the coolness
> Murmurs, and the gray leaves flicker
> Where sleep wanders."

Occasionally, one encounters a development that seems rather out of harmony with the original Sapphic lines. To restore the fragment: "Death is evil; the gods have so judged; had it been good, they would die,"—in the following manner seems to us unjustifiable.

> "If death be good,
> Why do the gods not die?
> If life be ill,
> Why do the gods still live?
>
> If love be naught,
> Why do the gods still love?
> If love be all,
> What should men do but love?"

In No. XLVI, again, the second verse is rather too coldly intellectual to balance the first. These remarks made, however, one has only admiration for the lyrics that Carman has woven around the Sapphic fragments. Whether these lyrics breathe the atmosphere of the Lesbian's work or not is another matter, and one which must be left to the decision of specialized scholarship. All that we would observe is this: the songs of Carman are exquisitely finished; they are often beautiful in conception; but there is little glowing passion in them. The dominant note is one of cool orchards and running water, and not one of love "fret with unsluiced fire." In saying this we imply no reflection upon the lyrics considered purely and simply as English verse. Carman may or may not have reproduced the atmosphere of the love songs of Sappho, but at any rate he has created *an* atmosphere, and one which is as refreshing to the jaded spirit as is the dew to the

closing flower. From the delicate touch of such lyrics as No. XVIII to the splendid artistry of No. XXIII,—which we quote as a fitting close to our chapter on the classical art of Carman,—there is a wide range of almost flawless work in the "Sappho,"—work that at times one is tempted to designate as crystallized perfection.

"I loved thee, Atthis, in the long ago,
When the great oleanders were in flower
In the broad herded meadows full of sun.
And we would often at the fall of dusk
Wander together by the silver stream,
When the soft grass-heads were all wet with dew,
And purple-misted in the fading light.
And joy I knew and sorrow at thy voice,
And the superb magnificence of love,—
The loneliness that saddens solitude,
And the sweet speech that makes it durable,—
The bitter longing and the keen desire,
The sweet companionship through quiet days
In the slow ample beauty of the world,
And the unutterable glad release
Within the temple of the holy night.
O Atthis, how I loved thee long ago
In that fair perished summer by the sea!"

CHAPTER X.

SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN.

THE "Songs of the Sea Children," which were published some two years after the appearance of the Sappho lyrics, differ from these latter in that a romantic form of expression is substituted for the classical form. With the removal of the restraint entailed by the employment of a somewhat exacting metrical system, and by the necessity of having to modify his utterance in accordance with that of another, the poet is able to give freer expression to his thoughts and emotions. The Songs are primarily love poems, but just because, and only because, they are written from the poet's heart, they are permeated with what may be termed the unitrinian spirit. Of didacticism there is not the slightest trace; the poet, as it were, lives his creed, and in poetry as in life it is better to live a creed than to talk about it. If anything will make humanity enamoured of "unitrinianism," it will be some such entrancing expression of the soul of its founder as is to be found in these passionate and glad-hearted lyrics. Never, one fancies, has the joy note in literature been struck so clearly and so refreshingly. The poet and his beloved are but two well-mated stops in the great organ of Nature, and through them both wells forth unceasingly and unchecked the joyous choric hymn of creation.

The fundamental conception underlying all these Songs is one with which the reader will be by this time tolerably familiar. There is, thinks the poet, a spirit working in all things to obey the dictates of which is to be filled with the joy that is the heritage of creative life. The birds and animals are happy because they do the will of this spirit which manifests itself in a vague craving for beauty, or rather, for creation in the beautiful. And man

also to find happiness must obey the promptings of desire;[1] he must ever seek beauty until he finds the one

> "Whose attributes had here and there
> Been scattered o'er the visible world before
> Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant
> To be united in some wondrous whole;"
>
> (Browning)

the woman,—the consummation in this scale of being of Nature artistry[2]—whose loveliness will reveal to him the purpose of creation,[3] and through whom alone can the greater beauty of the morrow be brought to pass. In the Songs, this quest is ended; "Free-foot," as the poet puts it, has found his "Rove-no-more," and in consequence the lyrics are full of unrestrained love-passion,—a passion as ardent as that of Nature herself. It need scarcely be pointed out that this passion is never merely sense-rapture. The loved one embodies all the ideals, physical, mental, and spiritual, that have been implanted in the soul of the lover. The poet, it is true, does not say this in so many words,

---

[1] See "The Word at St. Kavin's."

[2] *(a)*

> "I wander through life
> With the searching mind
> That is never at rest
> Till I reach the shade
> Of my lover's door."
>
> (Sappho, xlvi).
>
> The iron æons waited
> And died along the hill
> Nor saw the uncreated
> Dream of the urging will. . . .
>
> But here in the sun's last hour,
> (So fair and dear thou art!)
> He (God) shuts in my hand his flower,
> His secret in my heart."
>
> (Songs of the Sea Children, iv).

[3]

> "Thou art the sense and semblance
> Of things that never were,
> The meaning of a sunset,
> The tenor of a star."
>
> (Songs, iii).

but it is everywhere implied. Man as "a thing of sense and spirit" requires more than physical beauty in a woman,—if indeed it could exist alone,—before he can describe himself to her as

> "A frayed imperfect strand
> Reverberant to every note
> Alive beneath thy hand."

For Carman, moreover, it must never be forgotten, the three phases of our being are so bound up with each other that the body to be really beautiful must be the expression of a lovely inner life. Such a line as "Her body was the only gate of Paradise I knew" must not be translated into terms of pure sensuality. In his adoration of beauty, whether it be beauty of Nature or beauty of people, Carman sees ever behind the corporeal the joyous and lovely soul.

> "What is colour but the soul of things?"
> (The Word at St. Kavin's).

> "Argue me, 'There is no doorway
> In this great wall we explore,'
> Till there comes a bird-note; straightway,
> There's the door!
>
> Enter here thou beauty-lover,
> The domain where soul resides;
> Ingress thought could not discover,
> Sense provides."
> (A Forest Shrine).

Nay, further, Carman not only worships the spirit through its physical manifestation, but he draws from the latter hints of the perfection that it will bring to pass in the future,—the perfection of the incarnate God. "Thou art," he says to his beloved, "the

hope of morrows that shall be by-and-by."[1] The same idea may be found in an early love-poem:—

"All the tumult of hate and war
Of poor mad men who sorrow and sin,
Grope and are gone with a sigh ere the dawn—
Is God's bad dream we wander in.

But the dream shall pass and the dreamer awake,
In the brightening morning by-and-by,—
Bethink him, and then refashion us men:
All this I believe because of Nell Guy.

How else? For she never could learn it here
That gracious abundant pitying way
Of the patient sun with his journeys done,
In giant content at the close of day."
(Nell Guy).

There is no need to labour the point. If, on the one hand, we would make it clear that the poet of these Songs is no mere sensualist, on the other, we must not give the false impression that he regards love with the cold eye of the philosopher. One is infinitely nearer to Sappho in these poems than to Emerson.

As in analysing a drama one usually begins with the principal personage, let us commence our brief examination of these Songs with a glance at the poet's beloved. One has several sketches of this radiant being:—

"Eyes like summer after sundown,
Hands like roses after dew,
Lyric as a blown rose garden
The wind wanders through.

Swelling breasts that bud to crimson,
Hair like cobwebs after dawn,

[1] Song xxiv.

And the rosy mouth wind-rifled
When the wind is gone."

Although we somewhat dislike the employment of the epithet "lyric,"—it is one that the poet uses much too frequently,—we find the description in Carman's best manner. There is a sweet freshness about it that is redolent of a land of dewy dawns and breezy twilights. Moreover, the note of the book, that of flower-like innocence and purity, is well struck. Elsewhere, Carman is not so happy. The "Song of Solomon" imagery that he occasionally offers us is too exotic to be appropriate in a volume of "twilight songs out of the simple North." Such lines as "thy breasts are citrons odorous of the East," are artistic blunders. (It is strange what an attraction the meretricious Orient possesses for Canadian poets, French and English!) Let us hold fast to the portrait of the verses we have quoted; it, at least, is thoroughly in harmony with the earth-born love of the following stanza:—

"This is the time of the golden-tress,
The heaving heart and the shining glance,
And the little head that bows
Meekly to love at last.
Then two behold the flowery world in a trance
Through the spring's new vast
Of sunshine and tenderness."

This unreluctant obedience to the "law and impulse" of Nature, so deliciously reminiscent of the Lucy of Wordsworth, is the key note everywhere. (All Nature is treading the love-way it seems to the poet who sees in it the reflection of his own passion). When

"A heart upwelling in the forest flowers
Has made them lovers every one;"

then for him, too,

"The world is a golden calyx,
A-swing in the bloom of time,

Where floret to floret ripens
And the starry blossoms rhyme."

Although, of course, Carman does not go the length of making love a product of April alone, such phrases as "Dear, what hast thou to do with anything in the wide world beside joyance and spring?" are pre-eminently characteristic of the intense naturalism of the volume. One has this naturalism at its very best from the artistic point of view in such a piece as the following:—

"I was a reed in the hilly stream,
Heigh-ho!
And thou my fellow of moveless dream,
Heigh-lo.

Hardly a word the river said,
As there we bowed him a listless head.

Only the yellowbird pierced the noon;
And the summer died to a drowsier swoon,

Till the little wind of night came by,
With the little stars in the lonely sky.
. . . . . .
It shook the stars in their purple sphere,
And laid a frost on the lips of fear.

It woke our slumbering desire,
As a breath that blows a mellow fire,

And the thrill that made the forest start
Was a little sigh from our happy heart.

This is the story of the world,
Heigh-ho!
This is the glory of the world,
Heigh-lo."

If love be indeed a "throwing down of limits," then surely it has never been more perfectly expressed than in this lyric. Not

only in the two individuals, but in all Nature as well, there pulses one warm life. We much prefer such work as this to the somewhat flippant verses of LXVII, although the latter are not without a certain charm. Sometimes, however, Carman carries his naturalism too far. Whilst finding the thought of the following stanza irreproachable, we cannot approve of its expression:—

> "Thou art the fair seed vessel
> Waiting all day for me,
> Who ache with the golden pollen
> The night will spill for thee."

Such Whitman-like lines can scarcely be considered artistic. Let us not, however, linger over what is after all a solitary lapse from the high standard of good taste that characterizes the volume. If the naturalism of Carman be responsible for such a slip, it has produced also some of the very best poetry that the poet has given to the world of literature. No English poet since Swinburne has composed a lyric that in splendour and profundity of passion can vie with this:—

> "I loved you when the tide of prayer
> Swept over you, and kneeling there
> In the pale summer of the stars
> You laid your cheek to mine.
>
> I loved you when the auroral fire,
> Like the world's veriest desire,
> Burnt up, and as it touched the sea,
> You laid your limbs to mine.
>
> I loved you when you stood tiptoe
> To say farewell, and let me go
> Into the night from your laced arms,
> And laid your mouth to mine.
>
> And I shall love you on that day
> The wind comes over the sea to say

Your golden name upon men's mouths,
And mix your dust with mine."

One would need to be both blind and deaf to all that poetry implies to be insensible to the appeal of these verses. In the golden atmosphere that permeates the poem and consecrates its passion like a divine radiance, the reality is transfigured and glows with a tenderness that reaches out into the infinite. Such lyrics drive a critic to despair in filling him with ecstatic delight; they place him, as it were, between the Scylla of saying too little and the Charybdis of saying too much. If, in the reader's opinion, we have approached too near to the former, we can only quote in apology the lines of the poet himself: "Know you not the word unsaid is the flower of speech?"

Different in atmosphere, with the fragrance of Nature breathing from every line, such a lyric as the following is only inferior to the little master-piece we have just cited. Carman is always at his very best in transcribing these memory pictures.[1]

"I shut my eyes and see you
I shut my eyes and see you
Under the lilacs stand,
While the soft mists of sea-rain
Are blowing in to land.

Your little hands steal upward,
Our fingers interlace;
And through the driving sea-dark
I feel your burning face."

One little hour of heaven
Lost in a single kiss;
And then we two for ever
The castaways of bliss.

[1] "Under the Rowans," an earlier piece is almost equally beautiful.

To-night the scent of lilacs
Comes up to me again,
And ghosts of buried summers
Walk with the lonely rain."

We have omitted purposely the two first verses and the last verse. As it stands, the picture is complete; to add to it but detracts from its beauty. Not that the verses omitted are weak in any way; they are pleasing, but they are superfluous. As we have given the lyric, the opening lines put one at once "in medias res," an artistic procedure which is always delightful and which is doubly so here on account of the repetition of the imagery in the last verse. One has, as it were, picture and frame.

Of the shorter snatches of song that are wafted like bird-notes through the fresh atmosphere of the book, we can mention only a few of the more representative. A peculiarity of many of these is the way they imbue Nature with the feelings of the poet. All the world seems to rejoice or to grieve with the lover. This, of course, is merely a transcription of common experience. "Love," says Emerson, "rebuilds the world for the youth. It makes all things alive and significant." He might have added, to be complete, that the absence of the beloved makes all things dead and insignificant. Carman is always convincing when giving expression to such experiences.

"The day is lost without thee,
The night has not a star.
Thy going is an empty room
Whose door is left ajar.

Depart: it is the footfall
Of twilight on the hills.
Return: and every rood of ground
Breaks into daffodils.

Thy coming is companioned
By presences of bliss;

The rivers and the little leaves
All know how good it is."
(II).

A more philosophical note, and one which the beginning of his chapter sufficiently explains, is struck lightly in the following lting verses:—

" Out of the dust that bore thee,
What wonder walking came,—
What beauty like blown grasses,
What ardour like still flame!

What patience of the mountains,
What yearning of the sea,
What far-eternal impulse
Endowed the world with thee.

A reed within the river,
A leaf upon the bough,
What breath of April ever
Was half so dear as thou?"
(LXXX).

The idea which we encountered in " Behind the Arras " (the poem) that the soul at death returns with its treasures to enrich the ocean of cosmic life, is found again in such a little snatch as this:

" In the blue mystery of the April woods,
Thy spirit now
Makes musical the rain-birds' interludes,
And pink the peach-tree bough.

In the new birth of all things bright and fair,
'Tis only thou
Art very April, glory, light, and air,
And joy and ardour now!"

We have left the best of these shorter lyrics to the last. All the

poet's faith and joy is stayed upon the revelation of love. In making Julie say to Raphaël, "Thou art God for me, I am God for thee," Lamartine may have been merely employing romantic hyperbole; the words, however, are capable of being interpreted into terms of Carman's religion: "Thou are God for me, for in thee and through thee I perceive the highest manifestations of the immanent Divine." It is such a thought that gave birth to this superb quatrain:—

> "Over the sea is a scarlet cloud,
> And over the cloud the sun.
> And over my heart is a shining hope,
> And over that, Yvonne."

With these lines ringing in our ears, we must take leave of these lyrics which are so full of the music of earth and whose charm is so unfailing. There are in them, and we have not disguised the fact, a few false notes, but taken as a whole they are as fresh and as inspiring as the song of the thrushes on a clear spring morning. As befits Songs of the Sea Children, simplicity and spontaneousness, both in regard to technique and to diction, is one of their dominant characteristics, but this is never allowed to degenerate into slovenliness or banality. With their lilting melodies and their innocent delight in all things beautiful, they are a very real solace to the soul of man on its difficult and betimes weary trail. And for such one can but be grateful to the poet.

CHAPTER XI.

RECENT POEMS.

AFTER the publication of his "Collected Poems" (these do not include the Sappho) in 1905, Carman somewhat neglected the Muse of Poetry for a time, and gave most of his attention to what he calls her "more opulent sister," the Muse of Prose. Of the work of this period, "The Poetry of Life" and "The Making of Personality," what concerns us has already been said. We may observe, however, in passing that the poet has the gift of being able to write singularly attractive prose, and that here and there in his essays one encounters passages of great poetic beauty. Mr. Francis Thompson in *The Athenæum* remarked that this work of Carman exhibited "a style distinguished by pellucid simplicity, as it might have been written by a child that, in some wondrous way, knew sound English prose by instinct." With these remarks we cordially agree.

In 1909, Carman broke the almost uninterrupted silence that he had maintained, as far as lyric utterance is concerned, for some four years, and gave to the world a little volume of poems entitled "The Rough Rider." Despite the khaki-coloured binding (a decidedly attractive one, by the way), and the dedication to ex-President Roosevelt, the book hardly justifies its title. With the exception of the second poem, which sings the praises of "the man who rides and reads," the contents savour about as little of camp life as they do, say, of a Montmartre studio. Many of the pieces, it is true, sound a clarion-like appeal "for freedom, the Republic, and everlasting right!" And nearly all of them deal with more obvious themes than those of the preceding volumes; but then such characteristics,—and especially when they are as here combined often with a highly refined art,—do not

naturally suggest either the epithet "rough" or anything connoted by the substantive "rider." It would be puerile to insist upon the point. After all, the title of a volume is of little importance. Let us turn to the contents.

The first, and certainly one of the most pleasing features of the poems, is the way they give expression to the atmosphere of New England. Carman is justly proud of the traditions of his race, and this pride lends colour and enchantment to his treatment of New England themes. Without exception, the descriptions of the quiet scenery of the home of his ancestors are carefully and lovingly written; and the expression of the sturdy Puritan spirit, modified by the kindly touch of time, is wholly sympathetic and captivating. What could be more fitted to conjure up the vision of a New England spring than this?

"The far-off woodlands floated a mist of greyish blue,
With here and there the sanguine of maples showing through,—
The careless tinge of valor, the tatters of romance,
Inwoven in the habit of sober circumstance.
Through Craigie Street and Brattle the lilacs brushed the eaves,

Old Gables stood transfigured in the miracles of leaves."

The touch in the third and fourth lines is perfect. Equally beautiful is the little sketch in the lyric "In Golden Lacquer."

"Against the sunset's burning gold,
Etched in dark monotone
Behind its alley of grey trees
And gateposts of grey stone,
Stands the old Manse, about whose eaves
An air of mystery clings,
Abandoned to the lonely peace
Of bygone ghostly things."

That amid such delightful surroundings, the spirit of his sturdy forbears should awake in the soul of the poet is not to be wondered at. After all is said and done, "we are what Nature made us," as Wilfrid Campbell puts it and sooner or later "life's art passeth away," leaving behind, slightly modified perhaps but still supreme, the iron traditions of our sires. Looking at the old grey homesteads nestling peacefully in the vernal sunshine among their stone-fenced orchards, Carman would not have been human if the thought had not come to him,—

> "Here lived the men who gave us
> The purpose that holds fast,
> The dream that nerves endeavour,
> The glory that shall last.
> Here strong as pines in winter
> And free as ripening corn,
> Our faith in fair ideals—
> Our fathers' faith—was born."

The second feature of the poems, and in some cases a much less admirable one, is the way they are penetrated with the poet's philosophy. Such pieces as "The Angels of Man," "St. Michael's Star," "At the Making of Man," are mere parables. The thing is well done,—or, if one prefer it, the pill is well gilded, —but we will have none of it. One cannot, however heaven-born be his genius, keep on clothing the dry bones of a few basic ideas without in the end tiring his reader. "A Puritan Captain" we found highly pleasing despite its moral; but it was because the subject was treated for its own sake. Once more let us observe—we must ask pardon for the monotonous repetition—we have no quarrel with the philosophy of Carman; what we object to, and that strongly, is the serving up under a variety of guises of a few principles. The exercise may be an excellent mental gymnastic, but it is not art, nor does it do justice to the philosophy of the poet.

When Carman drops parable and gives his intellectual and

imaginative faculties free play, he produces work of a very different order. He may be still in a sense a preacher, but he is certainly no longer one whose text forms the sole interest of his sermon. He ceases to be the mere teacher and becomes the philosophical poet. The poems of "Behind the Arras" gave an earnest of what Carman was capable of producing in the latter capacity, but owing to the obsessing desire of the poet to propagate the principles of his creed, this earnest for long but flattered to deceive. Such a piece of work, however, as "On Ponus Ridge" fully realizes the high expectations to which the early poems gave birth. Without going the length of saying that it is the finest production of Carman's genius, we can at least assert that it is the one that fulfils most completely the exigencies of the poet's artist ideal; it appeals to our reason, to our emotion, and to our sense of beauty, in something like an equal degree. Both, then, as an example of Carman's theory of art carried to its fullest execution, and as a splendid piece of work in itself, the poem merits and demands that we should quote freely from it.

The opening verse of the poem is daring enough. Almost as if conscious of the stigma that is usually placed by artists upon the didactic poet, Carman boldly adopts the manner of the preacher and challenges criticism. "What is your comment, wandering brother," he makes the old Connecticut granite say to the striding rain, "not on the new word 'Love one another,' but the harder text, 'Ye shall rise again'?" The following verses amply justify the poet's apparent confidence in his own powers:—

"Hast thou found out truth at the core of being, in thy long wandering to and fro?
Dost thou know what lurks beyond foreseeing in the endless rhythm of ebb and flow?
'Much have I heard,' said Rain, 'of the babel and heated haste of the lordling man,
Telling the wind his gorgeous fable; but who shall hurry or check the plan?'"

In these lines we have a strong expression of Carman's attitude towards religion. "The foundations of life are still far beyond the reach of investigation" and "our heated haste" to lay them bare avails but little. Everything is provisional and the end of our spiritual pilgrimage, whatever "gorgeous fables" we may invent about it, beyond the range of our vision. "But among the realities of life as we perceive it is the sense of trust in continual goodness and abiding love. Why should we vex ourselves about the problem of immortality for the soul?"[1] The soul is sure of itself and is continually seeking its own great ends.

"I take small heed of the tales, he mutters," the glittering
copious rain ran on;
"My music drowns the words he utters; I make my bed
where his town-lights shone,
I hear the drone of his church and college, humming like
hives from roof to floor
With direful chant and delirious knowledge, as I pass
foot-free by their open door.[2]
I have heard the vaunts of his daring dreamers, the things
foretold by his sons of might,
And watched him flaunt like the boreal streamers that glow
and fade in the arctic night.

---

[1] See "Easter Eve" (The Kinship of Nature).

[2] Compare Whitman:—

(a) "I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are
so placid and self-contained,
I stand and look at then long and long,
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God. . . ."

(b) "Hurrah for positive science! long live exact demonstration!
. . . . . .
Gentlemen, to you first honours always!
Your facts are useful, and yet they are not my dwelling,
I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling."

I have seen the flare of his pageants kindled, the pride of
Carthage, the pomp of Tyre;
And even as I fell they sank and dwindled, beaten down like
a farm-boy's fire."

If ever verses were calculated to bring home to man the insignificance of his powers when compared with those of Nature, it is these verses of Carman.

"The earth in my house, the spring my portal; I serve without
envy, debate or fear.
Though I pass in mist, am I less immortal than the
greatening germ or the glowing sphere?
I come from the sea and I go to the sea; ten thousand
times have I risen again
From the welter and lift of eternity, to solace thy waiting
not in vain.
. . . . . .
The seeds of life are of my sowing, the virile impulse, the
fertile gush,
The gist and start of all things growing; but thine is the
warmth and pregnant hush.
The stir of joy is of my giving; a hint of perfection far and
fine
I speak as I pass to all things living; but the patient wisdom
and lore are thine."

The rain, it will be noticed, has become almost an incarnation of the inspiration of spring[1] and the Connecticut granite a symbol of Nature regarded both as form and spirit.

"Then the mother granite, grey, eternal, scarred, to the
careless eye uncouth,
Spoke in a language pure and vernal, solemn as beauty and
sweet as truth.

[1] Compare "Our Lady of the Rain."

In the voice of the Ridge in her April season, through the babble of streams and the call of birds,
Under the rune I caught the reason, out of the murmur I made the words.

"Nay, my comrade, I too must pass;[1] though my fleeting hours be ages long,
I abide in the end no more than the grass, than a puff of smoke or a strain of song.
If I give myself to the moment's rapture of lilt and leafage, shall I repine
That the joy I bestow escapes recapture, spent for the beauty of branch and vine?"

. . . . . .

"Here all day long I shall lie and ponder the teeming life whereon I brood,
While the buds unfold, the low clouds wander, and all things flow to rhythm and mood.
And seeing all form but the trace of motion, all beauty the vestige of joy made plain,
Shall I stint my care and my devotion, to vex me with counting the once and again?"

. . . . . .

"I loosen the sheaths of the bladed rushes, I lift the sap in the spiral cells,
Till the first soft tinge through the woodland flushes, and the crimson bud of the maple swells.
I nurse them to beauty hour by hour. And there by the road in its grove of pine,
The little bare school with its dreams of power and joy of knowledge,—that, too, is mine!"

It is difficult to speak of such a poem as this without employing superlatives. The way it swings with perfect ease from "the infinitely great to the infinite little;" the simplicity and invariable

[1] Not "die" but "change in form."

precision of the natural imagery;[1] the majestic and varied rhythm,—in itself an artistic triumph,—all go to make up a masterpiece that has few equals in twentieth century English poetry.

It is almost a sacrilege to mention any of the other pieces of the volume after the one we have just quoted. Yet, apart from the metrical parables, some of these are interesting in subject, while one and all are beautiful in form. "Champlain" is a typical New England production after the manner of "The Discoverers" of Wilfred Campbell and the "Columbus" of James Russell Lowell. The poem of Campbell "is dedicated to the memory of all those great souls who, in days gone by, in the bold spirit of discovery ventured out on the then trackless seas of the unknown west, in quest of this New World which their undaunted zeal and enterprise have won for us as a boon to the race and a blessing to mankind."

> ". . . . . Souls too great for sloth
> And impotent ease, goaded by inward pain
> Of some divine, great yearning restlessness;
>
> Which would not sit at home on servile shores
> And take the good their fathers wrought in days
> Long-ancient time-ward,—reap what others sowed;
> But nobler sought to win a world their own, ...
>
> Saw visions in the future, round the west
> Of Europe's fading sunsets; held a hope
> Of some new paradise for poor men's cure
> From despotisms of old dynasties
> And cruel iron creeds of warped despairs."

[1] As for example,

> "At morn I shall see from my stream-bed narrow, the wild geese flapping with honk and plash,
> To steady and drive their Indian arrow north-by-east for the Allegash."

We cite these lines because they show clearly enough the manner in which American poets, French and English, conceive as a rule such men as Columbus and Champlain. For them, these explorers are not mere adventurers, but something in the nature of instruments of the Divine will.[1] Campbell and Fréchette make them conscious "instruments"; while Carman, with greater respect for historical fact, conceives them as unconscious "instruments." The moral, if one may use the term, that all draw from the discovery of America is very much the same: None of the old adventurers found the Eldorado of his dreams "but in the New World again was face to face with life's familiar laws." Still, their enterprise was not in vain. It was as if, to return to Carman's poem,

> . . . . God said to Man,
> "Try once again my plan,
> Here is a continent all new,
> Take it and see once more what thou canst do."

In the lines that follow the poet expresses in an unmistakable manner the inherent desire of the American peoples to build up the ideal state of the future. "This," he says of the New World, "is God's garden ground,

> "And we are the tillers thereof,
> And the crop shall be men and women,
> As ever of old,—
> Not a pale city breed
> Bred between hunger and greed,
> But a new cosmic race,
> With the poise of the world in its mien,
> The ineffable soul in its face,

[1] Compare:—

> ". . . n'oubliez-pas, nous sommes en ce lieu
> Les instruments choisis du grand œuvre de Dieu!—"
> (La Légende d'un Peuple—Première Nuit).

Remembering the best that has been,
And its password, 'the best that can be!'"

This poem and "The Golden West" which follows it only tend to confirm what we have on several occasions suggested in this book,—that the reason for the strong didactic tendency which pervades both French and English Canadian poetry must be sought in natural instinct of young races to assure their future by all the means in their power. Crémazie and Fréchette, Campbell and Carman, all are poet-missionaries. "Champlain," however, is not a piece of work which owes its interest solely, or even mainly, to its subject. Its charm which is not inconsiderable lies rather in the attractive rhythm of its "vers libres" and in the fine descriptive passages which serve as a sort of prelude. Such descriptive passages,—as we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter,—abound in the volume which, in this respect, contains much of the poet's very best work. Carman here vivifies his pictures with felicitous touches of imagination which, without doing any violence to reality, aid materially in bringing home to us their emotional significance. In "Memorial Day," to give a concrete example, one finds this charming image,

"The wild cherry bough
Is robed for the white celebration of memory now,"

an image at once suggestive of the robust joy of the spring and of the chastened, but none the less uplifting joy that the thought of our heroes awakes then in our hearts.

The poem entitled "Decoration Day," or rather the first part of it, shows Carman for once giving us a transcription of a city picture. It is scarcely more than a sketch, but, especially in the third stanza with its Whitman-like movement, it conjures up the atmosphere very effectively.

"And hark, above the car-bells and the cries
A band is playing! Troops are on the move.
Far down the Avenue a column wheels

To pass the pillared Treasury, on the way
To honor its dead heroes sleeping there
On the heights of Arlington ten thousand strong."

Save for the parabolic verse which as elsewhere we have not hesitated to condemn as being unworthy of Carman's art, we find this volume, "The Rough Rider," an invariably pleasing and, at its best, a great piece of work. In form, it is more perfect than anything we have examined with the exception of the "Sappho," and in thought it is a distinct advance upon its precursors. Not that it reveals any new aspect of the poet's philosophy, but it is a fuller expression of it. On the emotional side, it is true, it is less rich than the preceding books, but within the somewhat narrow gamut of racial pride and nature-born joy and confidence, it rises often to heights of noble feeling. "On Ponus Ridge" would have been sufficient to redeem the defects of any volume, and the defects of "The Rough Rider" are few.

Last year, 1911, Carman published in America another slight book of poetry bearing the title "A Painter's Holiday." The work appears to have met with a favourable reception at the hands of American reviewers. "Such poetic art as Mr. Carman gives us," wrote the literary critic of the Boston Transcript, "comes from no other pen in the English-speaking world to-day. . . . . There is a profound, or rather a miraculous kind of hope realized in all these poems that lies hidden until evoked in some image of beauty, or transmuted through some sudden revelation of message." Our own impressions of the volume are somewhat varied. Firstly, the artistic manner of the poet is less distinctive than in some of his other books; it suggests immediately that of Carman's master, Robert Browning, in "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." Yet, it is no feeble imitation; the verse of the Canadian poet is more polished and more melodious than that of the English singer and yields but little to it in imaginative quality. Secondly, the thought of the poems easily soars above that of any previous work of Carman, with the exception of "The

Rough Rider" at its best. How it is difficult to say, but Carman in these poems manages to render his philosophy a thing of beauty, a thing that lays a potent spell upon the mind and convinces it almost despite itself. Hitherto, as the reader will have perhaps noticed, we have treated this philosophy respectfully but without enthusiasm; we wrote as we felt. After reading "A Painter's Holiday," however, we confess—and we make the admission wholeheartedly,—that our feelings towards the poet's creed have become immeasurably warmer; if Carman has not given us in the volume what we can believe, he has at least given us what we would wish to believe, and for that we are devoutly thankful.

"A Painter's Holiday" contains but five poems of which the title piece, although useful as an introduction to the book, is the least impressive. "On the Plaza," which follows, and which illustrates the inspiriting effect upon their neighbours of those who possess "the magic gift of tuneful joyousness," is rather better, but still far below the level of the three remaining poems. "Mirage," the story of the inspiration of a nature sketch, is a fine piece of work. The painter relates how one day during his holiday he had sat alone on the moorlands by the sea, thinking of the soul that must lie behind the outer guise of Nature and of how it is only when the heart is filled with the joyance of love that we understand the meaning of creation. Suddenly,

> "The House of space and time grew tense
> As if with rapture's imminence,
> When truth should be at last made clear,
> And the great worth of life appear;
> While I, a worshipper at the shrine,
> For very longing grew divine,
> Borne upward on earth's ecstasy,
> And welcomed by the boundless sky.
> A mighty prescience seemed to brood
> Over that tenuous solitude
> Yearning for form, till it became

Vivid as dream and live as flame,
. . . . . .
All earth's delight and meaning grown
A lyric presence loved and known.
. . . . . .
. . . . there appeared before my eyes
In a beloved familiar guise,
A vivid questing human face
In profile, scanning heaven for grace
Up-gazing there against the blue
With eyes that heaven itself shone through;
The lips soft-parted, half in prayer,
Half confident of kindness there . . . . .

So eager Mary might have stood
In love's adoring attitude,
And looked into the angel's eyes
With faith and fearlessness, all wise
In soul's unfaltering innocence,
Sure in her woman's supersense
Of things only the humble know.
My vision looks forever so . . . . . ''

Of the beauty of this conception of the soul in Nature "yearning for form" and using the vision and hand of the artist as the instruments wherewith to accomplish its desire, there is no need to speak; to endeavour "to paint the lily" were a thankless task. It may be, however, interesting to the reader to learn that the "Mirage" of Carman is not without something of a counterpart in American art. Writing on the work of Mr. Elliott Daingerfield, an American critic observes that "his landscapes are never mere pictures, for, with all the perfection of their finish, recreating as they do the sentiment of the place as well as the scene itself, it is the sense of vitality that is in them, their meaning I may say that makes itself completely felt at last. And this is because he sees a meaning in our landscape and fixes it in his paintings of it. . . . Any one who has seen Mr. Daingerfield's

painting, 'The Waters of Oblivion,' must realise how without meaning that mysterious and strangely beautiful little landscape would be were it not for the tiny white-robed figure standing before those peaks of night and fairly upon the brink of the unfathomable pool lying at their feet. Except for that touch with its miracle of rich colour, the canvas would be a monstrous thing, not simply unreal but unnatural. Yet as it stands this painting . . . . has an almost inescapable meaning, the whole suggestion of which lives in that little white figure." Whether or not Carman's poem was inspired by such a painting as "The Waters of Oblivion," we do not know.

"The Christmas Stranger" deals also with the inspiration of a picture. The opening lines, taken together with the title of the poem, indicate sufficiently the subject.

> "You wonder how I ever drew
> That 'Galilean Workman'—who
> The model could have been to give
> My work the charm that makes it live. . . ."

The theme, although scarcely new, is treated with dignity and power. The silent entry and the gentle yet imposing mien of the stranger are described in a manner that is at once reverent and inspiring of reverence.

> "There
> With his serene though wistful air,
> As if too modest to assume
> My need of him (although the room
> Was radiant with his manliness
> And quietude of proud address),
> Fronting the world in all men's sight
> From his uncompromising height
> And bearing of sweet dignity,
> He stood at pause regarding me—
> A foreign model, as I thought,
> Seeking employment, till I caught
> The brow's repose, the eye's command,

The mouth's compassion. Then the hand
Was laid upon the bowing breast,
The Orient's way, the head depressed
To honour me; while all my heart
Went out to him, alone, apart,
And far above the mortal men
My sight had looked upon till then."

To put his own philosophy in the mouth of such a personage was an extremely hazardous proceeding on the part of the poet. There was the double danger of detracting from the dignity of his creation and of imposing upon his philosophy a majesty of utterance that it might be unable to bear. Carman easily avoids all such pitfalls. Once, and once only, does he seem to us to let his "unitrinianism" carry him too far. The lines,

"Then in a diction pure and fine
And statelier than yours or mine,"

are not inharmonious perhaps with the rest of the poet's description of the Galilean, but they add nothing to it and were better left to the reader's imagination. One can say too much in poetry. The impressive discourse of the mysterious model we would fain give in its entirety—only by so doing could we convey to the reader an adequate idea of its unaffected graciousness and majesty,—but we must content ourselves with the citation of a few characteristic passages.

"Friend, rejoice!

The time is drawing near—the hour
When love, intelligence and power
Shall be made one, as once they were
In the beginning, when the stir
Of will took thought, and for the sake
Of beauty bade the world awake.

. . . . . .

Behold the work of thine own hands—
Is it not so therein? First springs

From vague unmarked imaginings
The sweet desire; then sudden thought
In some strange secret fire is caught
And kindled; and there stands new-born
Thy fresh ideal, dear as morn
And tender as the evening. Then
Remains the godlike task of men,
To realise that fair design
In sound, in color, or in line,
Till what was dreamed of good and true
Takes on the guise of beauty too,
As faith compels and means afford.
This is thy passion and thy reward.

So is the world renewed at length
In wisdom, holiness and strength;
The vision of the perfect good
Imposed upon the void and crude;
And the benign creative will
Slowly ascendant over ill,
Accomplishing the sweep and span
Of the development of man."

This, one might object, is but another rendering of ideas that the poet has already expressed times without number. Such an objection seems to us to carry little weight. In the first place, Carman has never before so concentrated his philosophy into a single poem; and, in the second, he has never given to it so clear and weighty utterance. One gets from this noble work no fragmentary, and hence often rather colourless conception of the poet's creed but a definite and impressive conception of the whole. Nor is this all; not only do we better realize the grandeur of Carman's thought in reading the poem, but we attain to a fuller comprehension of the "man" behind the thinker and the artist—he whose only aim is

". . . . but to feed its (the world's) multitude

With truth, with beauty, and good,
The water and bread and wine of life."

Love of humanity is the source of all the poet's work. The last passage of the poem expresses, as it were, the soul of Carman's beliefs—that which gave them birth.

"Yea,
The difficult and ancient way
To beauty lies through urge and stress
Where knowledge walks with love. Unless
Great Love arise and take thy hand
In that unknown and doubtful land,
Not all thy cunning can avail
To read the signs and keep the trail;
Not love of self and self's employ
But the untarnished seraph's joy
In serving others with the best
Hand can achieve or brain attest.
I charge thee in this world, above
All other things destroy not love!
For life must spring from life, and soul
Be given sustenance of soul,
And knowing love with toil thine eyes
This day shall see love's Paradise.
Wilt thou not also follow me?"

With the simple mention of the fact that the last poem of the book develops and illustrates the dominant idea of the above quotation, we must reluctantly take leave of "A Painter's Holiday" (to which we are conscious of having done scant justice) and briefly review the artistic evolution of which it is the present culmination.[1]

[1] We have reason to believe that Mr. Carman. is about to give to the public a poetical pageant which he has written in collaboration with Mrs. King. This work, which is made up of lyric moments in the lives of illustrious women, the poet considers his best and highest achievement. One awaits the appearance of the work with impatience.

Carman, we have seen, began his artistic career as a pure lyric poet singing, full-throated as a thrush, the varied emotions of a heart attuned to that of Nature. His art was at once simple, spontaneous, and imaginative. Trammels it had none save those that were naturally imposed upon it by alert and delicate senses which rendered the poet singularly susceptible to the influence of his natural environment. From this lyricism, Carman, with what would appear to have been a temporary exile from the world of Nature, passed to a kind of metaphysical symbolism which, owing its inspiration to his mental unrest, was full of profound emotion and wild imaginative splendour. His manner was rougher than in the early lyrics, and as in these, although from different causes, often vague and obscure. His art was, however, still free. This freedom, unfortunately, was soon to be renounced. With an increasing desire to promulgate his newly-formed creed, Carman rapidly bent his art to the service of morality. The result for a time was sheer disaster. The style, to meet the claims of a conscious or unconscious didacticism, was clarified until it verged upon the prosaic, while the themes became often mere parables, under the cloak of which the poet endeavoured to inculcate the root principles of his philosophy. Gradually, however, the artist in Carman restrained the vandalism of the neophyte. Improvement was first seen in two directions: the form became more polished and the natural description less explicitly didactic. The poet slowly, and with many lapses, evolved the species of classical art that reached its highest level in the "Sappho." In his more recent, and especially in his latest work, Carman, whilst dropping his classical themes, has retained his extreme care for the form of his verse. "A Painter's Holiday," moreover, would seem to mark the merging of the "parabolist" in the philosophical poet—a development which, if it cannot bring back the, for us, ever-to-be-regretted singer of "Low Tide on Grand Pré," may produce at least a master capable of continuing the splendid inspiration of "On Fonus Ridge." And for such one can only watch and pray.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TECHNIQUE AND DICTION OF CARMAN

ALTHOUGH far from desirous of venturing into the perilous realms of English prosody, and still less of posing as authorities upon the use of the English language, we cannot conclude our study of Carman as a poet without at least cursory examination of his technique and diction. Let us begin by casting a glance at the meters and a few of the stanza-forms[1] to be found in his work. These, generally speaking, are of an extreme simplicity. Carman is not a poet who relies upon an elaborate art to cover a paucity of ideas or a shallowness of emotion. By far the greater number of his poems are written in unassuming quatrains composed of three or four foot meters; it is not the poet's instruments but the effects which he produces from them, that are extraordinary. Still, if ability to handle difficult art-forms be considered a test of poetic craftsmanship, Carman none the less retains his title to the name of artist. To be convinced of that, one has only to read such a poem as "Memorial Day." We shall return, however, to this latter capacity of the poet later; for the present, let us content ourselves with noting the main characteristics of his simpler performance.

The lyrics of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" and the early sea poems are, for the most part, written in either iambic or trochaic tetrameter, the favourite stanzas of the poet being some form of the quatrain. One meets, however, a few pieces in iambic dimeter and a few in iambic trimeter. Two lyrics have a dactylic scheme. Although, however, anapestic meters are theoretically

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[1] Within the space at our disposal, we must confine our attention to the more noteworthy.

absent, or nearly so, the strong partiality of the poet for anapestic rhythm is very noticeable. This partiality betrays itself in a variety of ways. In both iambic and trochaic lines weak stresses are very frequent, the natural result being that the reader tends to fall into the anapestic swing in order to avoid leaving, as it were, holes in the verse. Such a tendency is accentuated in the case of the iambic schemes by the occurrence in nearly every third or fourth line of trochaic substitution. We give in illustration of what is meant a few lines from "Low Tide."[1]

(a) Iambic lines:

1. Initial substitution and weakened stress at third foot.
   "Sleeps in the cradle of the foam"
2. Initial substitution and substitution at third foot.
   "Now with the sea-wind in our hair"
3. Weakened stress at first and third foot.
   "It is a country of the sun"

(b) Trochaic lines:

1. Weakened stress at first foot.
   "With their purple bloom by bloom"
2. Weakened stress at first and third foot.
   "On the frontier of desire"

The cumulative effect of the frequent occurrence of such lines may be roughly appreciated by comparing the trochaic quatrains of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" with those of Carman's "The Master of the Isles." In the limited space at our disposal, we must confine our citations to a stanza of each poem.

"Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem."
(A Psalm of Life.)

[1] The volume bearing the title.

"There is rumour in Dark Harbour,
And the folk all astir;
For a stranger in the offing
Draws them down to gaze at her."
(The Master of the Isles: Ballads of Lost Haven).

In the iambic lines quoted above, it will be noticed that, although the rhythm tends to become anapestic, the ideal scheme is maintained as far as the number of syllables in the line is concerned. Trochees are substituted for iambs but not anapests. This is not always so, however; indeed, even in the lyrics where the meter is most pure theoretically, an occasional anapest may be found. One finds, for example,

"astir in the slim"

among the otherwise rigidly tetrasyllabic verse of "At the Voice of a Bird." In such a poem as "Why," anapestic substitution forms a definite part of the metrical scheme.

"For a name unknown
Whose fame unblown
Sleeps in the hills
For ever and aye."
(Why).

The whole rhythmical beauty of the quatrain is due to the anapestic sustitutions in the first and last lines, and the trochaic substitution in the third.

In the dactylic stanzas of "Wanderer," true anapestic lines are frequently met with, so frequently, indeed, that at times the metrical scheme is wholly obscured. Divorced from the rest of the poem, the following verses would scarcely be recognised as having a dactylic base. They harmonize perfectly, however, with the others.

"Therefore is joy more than sorrow, foreseeing
The lust of the mind and the lure of the eye
And the pride of the hand have their hour of triumph,
But the dream of the heart shall endure by-and-bye."

Many of the stanzas of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" owe part at least of their charm to the arrangement of the rhymes. This is especially true with regard to the dimeter quatrains of "Why" and "At the Voice of a Bird." The rhymes in the former run aabc, ddec, ffgh, iijh, . . . and those in the latter, abcd, abef, abed. . . . The effect produced is in both cases decidedly pleasing, and the same may be said of the arrangement in the tetrameter quatrains of "In Lyric Season" and of that in the five-line tetrameter stanzas of the title poem. The first-mentioned have their rhymes disposed as follows—abbc, deef. . . . The stanzas of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" exhibit an effective use of identical rhyme;—a *b* a b *b*. A few lyrics contain examples of interior rhyme.

The stanzas of "Golden Rowan" are noteworthy as showing the fondness of the poet for sweet-sounding proper names. One has quite a fragrant collection of these in his work. We cull a few at random: Gwendolen, Adrianna, Yvonne, Berris Yare, Yvanhoé. The charm that they lend to his lines may be appreciated in such verses as these:—

> "O Yanna, Adrinna,
> Loose hands and let me go,
> The night grows red along the East
> And in the drifting snow . . . ."
> (The Yule Guest).

The poems of "Behind the Arras" mark the appearance in Carman's work of a new stanza-form. This, although it varies considerably in detail, is essentially composed of iambic pentameters split up into sections. Its simplest form may be seen in "Behind the Arras" itself.

> "Day after day I loiter and explore
> From door to door;
> So many treasures lure
> The curious mind. What histories obscure
> They must immure!"

As we have said, varieties of this stanza are numerous; one of the most effective may be found in the later lyric, "At Columbine's Grave." Beyond the remark that its lines contain frequent anapestic substitutions, the stanza calls for no further comment. More interesting from a metrical point of view are the quatrains of "The Lodger." In these, the rhythm varies everywhere in accordance with the mood of the poet. To appreciate the effects that Carman can produce by substituting one kind of foot for another, one could hardly turn to a more suitable piece of work. We give three quatrains of the poem:

(*a*) Lines showing the iambic base (trochaic substitution in last line).

"The neighbours used to say
(They know so much!)
He looked to them half-way
Spanish or Dutch."

(*b*) Anapestic substitution (eight feet).

"Did the pipes at 'Bonny Dundee,'
Bid the regiments form?
Did a renegade's soul get free
On a wail of the storm?"

(*c*) Anapestic substitution (four feet).

"Or ever the King's dark cup
With its studs and spars
Be inverted, and earth look up
To the shuddering stars."

These stanzas are, of course, extreme examples. The transitions from one rhythm to another are always easy and natural.

The middle or, as we have termed it, "the transition" period of Carman's artistic development is noteworthy chiefly as exhibiting the tendency of the poet's quatrains, still his favourite stanza-forms, to assume a more frankly anapestic character, and

as showing two or three essays in the longer meters. To the anapestic pentameters of "Above the Gaspereau" and the "eight foot" trochaic lines of "In a Grand Pré Garden" we shall refer again later; suffice it to note here that the former are arranged in irregular one-rhyme stanzas and the latter in groups of three. A rather peculiar tetrameter analogous to that of "The Galley Slave" of Kipling is found in "White Nassau." The basic foot of this line contains three unstressed syllables followed by one stressed. Iambic and anapestic substitutions are, however, frequent. In the following line, this substitution is limited to the first foot.

"There is fog upon the river, there is mist upon the town"

Owing to the necessity for strong stresses occurring at regular intervals, the meter although vigorous enough admits of little variety. Much of the verse of this period is marred by a tendency to undue facility.

The classical poems of Carman show the poet making what is on the whole a very successful attempt to master the technique of continuous verse. The poem entitled "The Pipes of Pan" proceeds in trochaic tetrameter couplets, and there are several lengthy pieces, "A Vision of Sappho," for example, in unrhymed trochaic pentameter. The first-mentioned poem, as we remarked in a previous chapter, tends towards "jingle" at times. For the "Vision" we have the highest admiration. Rather, however, than cite illustrative passages from a piece we have quoted freely from elsewhere, we would turn for a moment and examine Carman's handling of the iambic pentameter in the few blank verse poems of the "Sappho." Let us take a passage from one of these.

As, | on a morn a traveller might emerge
From the deep green seclusion of the hills, |
By a cool road through forest and through fern, |
Little frequented | winding, | followed long
With joyous expectation and day dreams, |

And on a sudden, | turning a great rock
Covered with frondage | dark with dripping water, |
Behold the seaboard full of surf and sound, |
With all the space and glory of the world
Above the burnished silver of the sea. |

Such a passage seems to us to approach metrical perfection. In the first place, no two lines have exactly the same rhythm. The fact may be easily demonstrated. The first line contains in "traveller" an example of "slurring" which at once distinguishes it from the others. The second and third lines are peculiar in that they both have an unstressed first foot and a double-stressed second; the third line alone, however, repeats the peculiarity at the last two feet. Line four has an initial trochaic substitution which is only to be found elsewhere in the already eliminated line one. An unstressed fourth foot and a double-stressed fifth are met with in lines three, five, and six; line three we have dealt with; line five differs from line six in that it has a strong stress at the first foot. In line seven are five substitutions, one dactylic and four trochaic. The eighth line is the only perfect iambic pentameter. Lines nine and ten bear an apparent resemblance to one another but, if they be read carefully, it will be noticed that the stress at the first foot of line ten is much weaker than the corresponding stress in line nine. To demonstrate the beauty of the rhythmic whole is of course impossible; we do not think, however, that many readers will fail to perceive it. The suggestion of dripping water conveyed by the unusual seventh line and the artistic manner in which the variation of the pauses is regulated, are obvious.

Of the shorter meters in the "Sappho" lyrics and the lilting lines of the "Songs of the Sea Children"[1] we shall say little. Among the former an impure, although extremely effective, dactylic meter is often encountered. A good example is No. LXXXIX.

[1] Anapestic and iambic-anapestic meters predominate in these poems.

"Where shall I look for thee,
Where find thee now,
O my lost Atthis?

Storm bars the harbour,
And snow keeps the pass
In the blue mountains.

Bitter the wind whistles,
Pale is the sun,
And the days shorten.

Close to the hearthstone,
With long thoughts of thee,
Thy lonely lover

Sits now, remembering
All the spent hours
And thy fair beauty."

The rhythmic results produced in the above by various substitutions[1] are certainly pleasing. Such substitutions, however, give rise in some poems to lines which, without being in any way inharmonious, almost defy ordinary scansion. No. XIX. of the "Sappho" gave us difficulty in this respect.

"There is a medlar tree
Growing in front of my lover's house,
And there all day
The wind makes a pleasant sound.

And when the evening comes,
We sit there together in the dusk,
And watch the stars
Appear in the quiet blue."

The second line of the first verse seems to scan: a trochee,

[1] The last lines, for example, of verses two, three and five are composed of an anapest followed by a trochee.

an iamb, an anapest, an iamb; and the corresponding line in the following verse: an iamb, two trochees, an anapest. What the true scansion is, we do not pretend to know. Yet we can find no fault with the rhythm; on the contrary, these peculiar lines which elsewhere would be pure prose, appear in some extraordinary way to add to its charm.

"The Rough Rider," a well-written volume from the technical point of view, is remarkable on account of the poet's brilliant treatment of anapestic pentameters and octameters, and his impressive handling of a kind of irregular orchestral verse. To quote in illustration of his performance in the second-mentioned meter is unnecessary in view of our lengthy citations from "On Ponus Ridge" in the last chapter. We cannot refrain, however, from giving two short passages illustrative of his achievement in the other two kinds of verse to which we have referred.

(a) Anapestic pentameter.[1]

Once more over relics of winter | the willows all gold
Wave odorous plumes of enchantment, | the fernheads unfold
In forgotten places, | as fresh as when Pan long ago
Might pass through the bird-haunted woodlands | or linger to blow
On his pure keen pipe by the river. | The wild cherry bough
Is robed for the white celebration of memory now. |

(Memorial Day).

(b)

"And when to the hemlock solitudes return
The gold-voiced thrushes, and the high beech woods
Ring with enchantment as the twilight falls
Among the darkening hills;
And the new moonlight fills
The world with beauty and the soul with peace

[1] The meter also of "Above the Gaspereau."

And infinite release;
Is there any land that history recalls,
Bestowed by Gods on mortals anywhere,
More goodly than New England and more fair?"
(Champlain.)

Without wishing to indulge in rash hyperbole, we venture to think that passages such as these would not dishonour the work of even the greatest of English poets. We are not particularly interested in the subject of the second poem from which we have quoted, but we can never read its prelude without being profoundly moved by the charm of its imagery and the music of its verse. To be roused to enthusiasm, however, by the magic of Carman's verbal melodies is for us a by no means rare experience. Whether due to personal idiosyncrasy or no, the fact remains that not since when as a boy we first opened a volume of Shelley, has any discovery in the realms of poetry so fully satisfied and delighted our ear as the better work of Carman. We do not claim to speak for others but, for our own part, we must rank it unhesitatingly with the lyric utterance of the great immortals.

The master-singer under whom Carman served, as it were, his artistic apprenticeship, would appear to have been Robert Browning. In any case, the English poet has certainly exercised the deepest and most continuous influence upon the technique of his verse. This influence may be perceived even in so early a piece of work as "The Wraith of the Red Swan," the stanza-form of which is drawn from Browning's "Reverie." Carman, however, in his poem skilfully modifies the original; he retains the iambic-anapestic trimeter in the first, second, and last lines but shortens the third line by a foot. To every alternate stanza, moreover, he adds a Poe-like refrain. We give a stanza of Browning's poem and two stanzas of Carman's "The Wraith of the Red Swan":

"I know there shall dawn a day
—Is it here on homely earth?
Is it yonder worlds away

Where the strange and new have birth
That power comes full into play?"

(Reverie.)

"Through many an evening gone,
Where the roses drank the breeze,
Where the pale slow moon outshone
Through the slanting trees,
I dreamed of the long Red Swan.

How soon should the day grow wan,
And a wind from the south unfold,
Like the low beginning of dawn,—
Grow steady and hold
In the race of the long Red Swan,
In the race of the long Red Swan!"

(The Wraith of the Red Swan.)

Two things must be noticed about this stanza of Carman's; it has an individuality of its own, and it is used in a poem that differs entirely in subject from the poem of Browning. To speak of "The Wraith of the Red Swan" as an imitation would be absurd. Such a remark applies with less force to "The Word at St. Kavin's," where the adoption of the "Rabbi Ben Ezra" stanza-form is something of an artistic blunder. Both poems are philosophical in subject, and Carman's modifications[1] of the well-known stanza-form of Browning are not of a nature to prevent his composition—otherwise a fine piece of work—from suggesting close kinship with that of the English master. The adoption of the same stanza-form in "Lincoln" is less reprehensible.

In the more recent work of Carman, peculiarly "Browning" meters are frequently encountered. The unrhymed trochaic verse of "A Vision of Sappho," etc., is that of Browning's "One Word More" and, as we observed in the last chapter,

[1] The last line of Browning's stanza is an alexandrine; that of Carman's is a pentameter.

the whole of "A Painter's Holiday" is written in the meter of Browning's "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." "Above the Gaspereau" and "Memorial Day" would appear to owe their metrical inspiration to the unusual anapestic pentameters of "Saul" and much of "From the Book of Myths"[1]—the poems entitled "Legends of the Reeds"—to have been suggested by the trochaic octameters of "A Toccato of Gallupi's" (Men and Women). If, however, Carman has apparently borrowed freely from among the meters and stanza-forms of Browning, he at any rate handles his borrowings in a thoroughly competent manner, and that, after all, is the important point. To be original in technique at this time of day is next to impossible. No one who is acquainted with Carman's verse will dispute the title of the poet to be numbered among the music makers of literature, and to be a music maker is something better than to be an inventor of new instruments.

Whether one take as material for study the seemingly ingenuous diction of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" or the elegant and polished phraseology of the recent books, one is soon conscious of being in the presence of "a master of the inevitable word." As the beautiful lines which we have cited elsewhere from the first-mentioned volume abundantly prove, Carman possessed at the very outset of his literary career what may be termed the verbal instinct, and this instinct has been carefully cultivated ever since, not only for itself but also because speech-culture is an essential part of the poet's system of unitrinian education.[2] In many of his essays, Carman shows clearly the importance he attaches to discretion in the choice and use of words. "He" (the artist), he says in "The Kinship of Nature," "must enlist the sympathetic help of words by using them kindly and rightly according to their nature and genius, and as they belong, and not antagonize them by misapplication." There can

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1 "In a Grand Pré Garden" is in the same meter.

2 See Appendix III.

be little doubt as to the beneficent effect upon the poet's art of this cult of precise and gracious diction. Still, honesty compels us to state that, whilst holding Carman to be a true artist in his choice of words, we cannot hold him to be an impeccable one. No doubt, a certain license must be allowed to one who speaks "the English tongue not in the English way," but, even this granted, there are certain anomalies in his diction that can hardly be excused. Such faulty rhymes as "dwarf" and "laugh," "honour's" and "Madonnas," may perhaps be "Americanisms," but one cannot dispose thus easily of defects that fall into other categories. Let us briefly note these, prefacing our remarks with the necessary observation that they are, in common parlance, few and far between.

Archaisms, dialect words, and words from foreign languages, are met with in some of Carman's poems. One encounters such strangers as "me-ward," "thee-ward," "spilth,"[1] "blooth,"[2] "coolth,"[3] "feckless," "yammer,"[4] "Mother Natura," "mythus." The fifth of our list, the Dictionary of Dialect informs us, is "New England," the sixth and seventh we know to be good Scots. Against the use of these words in poetry we have nothing to say if they be employed correctly and in harmony with the general tone of the context. Two words, however, seem to us to offend in this respect. Carman apostrophizes Nature as "Mother Natura" in "Compensation," a poem that is thoroughly Northern in atmosphere, and misuses barbarously the very expressive epithet "feckless." The latter does not mean, as the poet appears to think it does, "without soul," but "without energy" with an accompanying idea of "all fingers and no thumbs." No Scot would tolerate for a moment "the feckless light of their golden eyes" (The Kelpie Riders) or "a feckless entity" (The Making of Personality).

1 "The Kelpie Riders," III., l. 107. Fleck.
2 "Songs of the Sea Children," XXXIV. Bloom.
3 "Sappho," XLI. Coolness.
4 "Hem and Haw." Yell.

The Elizabethan liberty that the poet permits himself occasionally in multiplying the grammatical functions of words does not make for good English. "To gentle her lover"[1] and "Spring's new vast"[2] might perhaps pass with difficulty, the poet having as sanction for the former the questionable authority of Kipling, and for the latter the usage of Shakespere and Milton "The vast and hoar lone of the sea,"[3] "whether God nears or fars,"[4] and "to suburb unguessed dominions,"[5] are quite indefensible.

At times, one surprises the poet in an offence against good taste. In the opening stanza of "Above the Gaspereau," he speaks of "the slow autumn sun that goes leisurely, taking his *fill* of life in the orchards" and in "St. Michael's Star" of the grass "teeming with God." Such expressions as "Browning, old fellow," and "my poor boy" (Raphael), jar upon European ears.

Before closing this chapter, we would remark the too great fondness of the poet for such words as "lyric," "dream," "sheer," "painted." The last mentioned is used to the point of becoming almost a stock epithet. Coleridge's

> "As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean."

reduces all such phrases as "painted droves" to the level of mere padding.

In common justice to Carman, we must conclude by pointing out once more that the defects in diction to which we have drawn attention are neither numerous nor particularly striking. It is always easy to pick holes in any poet's work if it be at all voluminous; it is rarely so easy as it is in the case of Carman to set off against the defects so many shining merits.

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1 "Above the Gaspereau," l. 170.
2 "Songs of the Sea Children," LXXXV.
3 "Whither."
4 "Seven Wind Songs," III.
5 "Bahaman," l. 57.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

WITH the close of the preceding chapter our examination of Carman's poetry came to an end. It remains for us here to note briefly the chief writers who have influenced the poet and to endeavour without presumption to appreciate his work in its entirety. Before venturing, however, upon such a task, let us gather together the main conclusions we have arrived at in the foregoing pages. Canada, we have seen, possesses two literatures, the one in English and the other in French. Of these the first alone can claim the distinction of having a poet worthy of the name. An explanation of this, or rather a partial explanation, for one can never wholly explain the apparition of genius, is not difficult to find. After the cession of their colony to Great Britain, the Canadian-French were long engaged in a relentless struggle to maintain their nationality and language. In this struggle—the more severe on account of their separation from France, their almost entire lack of education, and the habits of dependance they had acquired under the Ancien Régime—they found ready and efficient leaders in the Roman clergy, and to these they entrusted without reserve the destinies of their race. Such voluntary submission to ecclesiastical authority was not without its drawbacks. It held the nation together, but it was at the price of its mental independence and of its almost complete isolation from the rest of the civilized world. Against the influence of Protestant America and, in later days, of apostate France, the Church took every possible precaution. The effect upon Canadian-French letters was disastrous. Denied the intellectual and artistic sustenance necessary for their proper growth, they produced, and continue to produce, but etiolated and unformed flowers. Very different have been the conditions

of literary activity in Anglo-Saxon Canada. Not only were English-Canadian letters at their very birth in touch with the culture of Great Britain but they soon had the rare inspiration of seeing what was in great part their own tradition carried in the neighbouring New England States to full and splendid achievement. Such circumstances, and there were others scarcely less advantageous, favoured the appearance of a poet, and at length a poet appeared. Some fourteen years after the death of Emerson, whom he seems to have met in his youth, Bliss Carman, a Canadian of pure New England descent, published his first volume of poems.

At the outset of his artistic career, this poet was, as we have seen, a veritable child of Nature, possessed of singularly acute senses, and rendered thereby unusually sensitive to the influence of season and environment. His outlook on life, which was translated into lyrics of rare imaginative beauty and verbal charm, might have been that of some migrant bird endowed with the soul of an artist. With speculation on the why and wherefore of things he does not appear to have troubled himself. Conscious even in his moments of grief of the benign puissance of Nature, and enraptured with the loveliness of earth, he yielded himself up entirely to the rhythm of natural activity. All things appeared to him to be making for some preconceived perfection —a perfection of which April dreams were a partial revelation and October fulfilments a partial attainment—and without any doubt or fear he joined in the bannered procession. Such a blissful state of affairs did not, perhaps could not, last. For some reason or other, possibly the prosaic one of having to earn a livelihood, the poet forsook his bright companions of field and forest and entered the noisy, hustling press of civilization. The result was almost inevitable. The wear and tear of city life, together with the sordidness of commercial-minded America, played havoc with his sensitive temperament, and for a time, like Hamlet, he felt the world was out of joint. Exiled from Nature, his beliefs which were based on sensational consciousness

of a beneficent Divinity, gave place to fearful doubt, and his erstwhile joyous and confident outlook to one of weariness and depression. In this crisis, which found its natural expression in tumultuous and brilliantly imaginative verse, the poet drew, it would seem, but little consolation from either dogmatic convention or philosophical argument. He had felt—which was more convincing—the presence of the Power in nature and, presumably with a view to feeling it again, he set to work to analyse his former experiences. This analysis resulted in the following conceptions: that love, the impulse of Spring, is the revealer of divine ideals to the soul; that this impulse comes through the media of the senses and in proportion as these are perfect; that the function of the soul is to *actualize* its ideals, and it is only by performing this function that it can grow and be happy. From the last of these conceptions two others were naturally deduced: that the guidance of reason and the aid of a well-trained body are necessary for the welfare of the soul. In other words, the poet perceived that "man is a creature with three pronounced phases of being: the physical, the mental, and the spiritual. And yet so inseparable are these three natures, so bound and knit together in all their requirements, functions, and satisfactions, that they form not merely a triple alliance but a true trinity. To neglect one is to injure all." On the basis of this "unitrinian" conception of human nature and human need, Carman built up a system of conduct or, if one prefer it, of personal culture, the practice of which was attended by the most happy results. Little by little his confidence and good spirits were restored, and, as might be expected, he became enthusiastic over his new creed and its practical application. The tone of his verse changed from gloom to brightness, and it was soon apparent that, with all the ardour of a neophyte, he was bent upon leading his fellow-countrymen into the kingdom of his joy. The New Englander had awakened within him[1] and

[1] The fact of the poet's having settled in New England must not be overlooked.

he felt that his function as a poet was not merely to create beauty but to instruct as well. The outcome was a theory of art which was apparently deduced from his unitrinian philosophy. Because, he would seem to have reasoned, it is the will of the World Spirit to translate its ideals into actuality, poetry ought to be a translation of man's ideals; and because man is a trinity of mind, soul, and body, it must contain his highest conceptions and noblest emotions as well as be indicative of his sense of beauty. That it was the moralist rather than the artist in Carman that gave birth to these theories may be seen in the important corollary: "Since it is the prime duty of art to make us happy, ... to ennoble and enrich our lives, surely the one way in which art can be most immoral is by leaving us sad and depressed." Was the change in the poet's work brought about by his didactic desires and the application of these theories a change for the better? With the best will in the world, we cannot answer in the affirmative. The work was more voluminous but it was, as we pointed out, narrower in inspiration and more monotonous in emotion. Nor was this all; much of it showed signs of having been hastily written, as if the author cared more for the philosophical conceptions expressed—which were often trivial enough when viewed apart from the poet's system—than for the manner of their expression. The debut of Carman as a poet-missionary was not a success. Fortunately, the phase did not last very long. Gradually the artist in Carman restrained the over-zeal of the moralist, with the result that the poet's work, whilst continuing to be an embodiment of his philosophy, became at least a beautiful embodiment of it; in other words, it ceased to have merely a parabolic interest and came to have an æsthetic interest as well. In his choice of subjects the poet adopted the point of view of the beauty-lover in preference to that of the teacher, and, what is equally important, paid infinitely greater attention to the form of his verse. To-day, Carman's work, if still rigidly in accordance with his artistic theories, reveals at once a great artist and an impressive philosopher. In technique it is well-nigh perfect, and its

thought more concentrated and more mature than in the earlier stately imagery. The poet has overcome all obstacles and entered triumphantly the kingdom of his ideal.

Wherein lies the originality of Carman's work? The answer to such a question can only be given in the hackneyed expression, its intense naturalism. Its sweetness of versification and strength of imagery distinguish it easily, it is true, from the mass of Canadian verse, but after all these qualities, desirable and, indeed, necessary as they are, can scarcely be said in themselves to be unusual, even in excellence, in English poetry generally. The naturalism, or rather degree of naturalism, to be found in Carman's work is, we believe, unique. Let us be a little more precise. By common consent, one of the chief characteristics of nineteenth century English poetry is admitted to be its recognition of nature as a manifestation of spirit. Wordsworth was conscious of

> "A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Shelley perceived, and was enraptured by the perception of, "that light whose smile kindles the universe, that beauty in which all things work and move." In the presence of Nature, Byron confessed that he lived not in himself but became portion of that around him, and that to him high mountains were a feeling. Still, generally speaking, the life of Nature was for these poets a thing apart. They were spectators of the green world, enheartened and solaced by it but not of it. The Spirit whose presence they recognized in the sub-human dominions afforded them food for meditation; seldom, if ever, it was the mainspring of their actions. With Carman the case is almost the reverse. He is not so much a contemplative observer of Nature's activities as one who, in Emersonian phrase, *feels* the soul of the workman stream through him. In Spring there come to him, as to many of the lower forms of life, the desire to

wander and the desire to create—"familiar but uncomprehended promptings to vagabondage and to fresh endeavour;" in Autumn once more the primitive migrant instinct awakes within him but at this season the desire to create is replaced by a desire for rest. Such experiences lead him to view all life as a manifestation of the Power in nature and as obedient to the rhythm of natural activity—a point of view which, especially when it is suggested by the imagery rather than expressed, lends originality and charm to his work.

The naturalism of Carman's poetry is not, however, by any means confined to its outlook on life, it is manifested to an equal degree in its pagan spirit. A note of joy runs through it all, a note as careless and whole-hearted as that of a thrush in Spring. The poet loves sunshine, flowers, birds, all the bright and happy things of life; for what is woe-begone or even solemn he has little taste. This is noticeable in the way he speaks of the deity Himself. One is somewhat startled at being informed that the Master of the Universe is subject to bad dreams, that he "laughed in his sleeve" after having made the world, and that one day with "nothing else to do" he employed his time in creating a beautiful woman for the poet's delight. We do not, of course, suggest for a moment that such conceptions are bound up with the poet's idea of a Deity. They show, however, that religion for him partakes more of joy than of solemnity. This may be seen to some extent also in his creed itself. "How to be happy" is the problem it purports to solve rather than that of "How to be virtuous." Whether or no, the joy of the heart is, as Carman asserts it to be, a proof of its virtue, is a question that must be left for the philosophers to decide. Suffice it for us to have pointed out the prevalence of a pagan or, if one likes, epicurean spirit in the thought of the poet. William Sharp spoke truly when he said of Carman: "If ever there was a child of Nature, it is the author of 'The End of the Trail.'"

Although Carman is a distinctly original poet, he has nevertheless been influenced to no small degree by the masters of

English literature. It could hardly have been otherwise. A New Englander by race could not have closed his ears to the voice of Emerson nor an optimist by nature have failed to be thrilled by the utterance of Browning. Emerson it was who helped to free the poet from the shackels of dogma,[1] a precious service even from the literary point of view, for, denied the consolations of traditional religion, he was forced to go down to Nature and use his eyes and brain to discover a creed for himself. It is noteworthy that in Canadian-French poetry, which is largely the work of writers interested in the inculcation of a cut and dried religious dogma, close observation of nature is rarely encountered. "In not many of our books," remarks Camille Roy, "does one meet with a satisfactory representation of either the Canadian landscape or the Canadian soul. . . . The authors do not perhaps use their own eyes enough; they neither examine themselves sufficiently nor do they examine sufficiently the beings and natural life which surround them." Not only,

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1 With reference to this, the poet says himself: "Twenty-five years ago, when we were all of us even younger than we are now, there were thousands of youthful hearts imbued with the passion for truth and encouraged in noble ambitions by Emerson's incomparable words. Scholars, dreamers, students in college, in the counting room, by the lonely fire of logs, or within the sound of hurrying feet on the pavement—the message came to them with revelation and hope. It was a time when science was destroying superstition. To many a conscientious mind, being bred under the shadow of scrupulous orthodoxy, and yet beginning to be touched with divine doubt, the process of change was full of sadness. To the thoughtful boy, beginning to turn his eyes inward for the source of light, yet enamoured with the engaging loveliness of the earth, it seemed the height of tragedy to have the pillars of established faith removed. Not every one had the hardihood to accept all the conclusions of the new science without shrinking. There was need of a great friend whose unflinching courage might serve as a stay amid tottering creeds and overthrown convictions.

Such a friend was Emerson. Other philosophers and scientists inflexible in the cause of truth might overthrow the temples of our fathers, but that gentle yet intrepid spirit gave us a more spacious house of worship, bidding us abandon the old without regret. He taught us to look with equanimity upon the decay of dogma, and reassured us with confidence in the free spiritual life which dogma had overcrushed and obscured. He made us glad of our loss and light-hearted at being freed from an encumbrance. We perceived that while the signs and vestments of our paternal religion might vanish like smoke, the breath of goodness at the core of things remained potent and quickening as before." (The Poetry of Life—Emerson.)

however, did Emerson help to free Carman from dogmatic convention but he materially aided him to translate his own experiences into terms of metaphysics. The New England philosopher did not give him a belief, but he offered him certain conceptions which seemed to explain what he felt to be true.[1] By one to whom Nature had taught that "desire shall lead us home from far," the Emersonian doctrine that "the soul may be trusted to the end" could hardly fail to be accepted. Fundamentally, nevertheless, as may be seen in its insistence on the necessity for action, the system of Carman differs widely from that of Emerson.

From Robert Browning, Carman would appear to have drawn the interpretation of the evolutional theory which is to be found in several of his poems; from the English poet also he seems to have learnt much of his technique: and, as will be evident from our remarks on several occasions, other marked resemblances both in thought and in art between the two writers are frequently encountered. To speak of Carman, however, as some critics have done, as an imitator of Browning is ridiculous. The latter is a great poet of nature, but the intense naturalism of the Canadian poet has no place in his work. One has only to read "The Vagabonds" and "On Ponus Ridge" to see how different is Carman's outlook on life from that of his acknowledged master.[2]

Of the other writers who have influenced the Canadian poet, Matthew Arnold is perhaps the chief. There can be no hesitation in assigning to Arnold's influence a large share in the formation

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1 See Appendix "Emerson and Carman."

2 "Since first I sought you,
Found you and bought you,
Hugged you and brought you
Home from Cornhill,
While some upbraid you,
And some parade you,
Nine years have made you
My master still."

(In a Copy of Browning.)

of Carman's artistic theories.[1] Apart from this, however, the great English critic does not appear to have helped greatly in moulding the thought of the transatlantic poet. It is worth noticing that Carman does not set a very high value upon Arnold's meditative poems. "Arnold the graceful and wistful abjurer of strife," he says, "has his place among the great English poets, first of all by reason of such faultless creations of beauty as Sohrab and Rustum, Tristram and Iseult, The Neckan, and The Forsaken Merman, and only secondary because of his meditative works." Carman may possibly have learnt some of his classical technique from Arnold. Of this, however, one cannot be certain.

When dealing with the life of the poet we referred to the deep and lasting influence upon him of his friendship with Richard Hovey. This influence, to speak here more precisely, was that of like upon like, the young poets being apparently of about the same age and certainly very similar in temperament. In the work of Hovey published about the era of the "Ballads of Lost Haven," one finds much that is in perfect harmony with the volume of Carman's.[2] In such a poem, moreover, as Spring

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1 Writing with reference to Arnold's "Wordsworth," Carman remarks in an essay on Longfellow: "Not since I picked up Emerson's copy of Arnold's own poems, as a visitor in that well-beloved Concord study nearly a score of years ago, have I turned the pages of any book with a feeling so near to veneration. For Arnold must always evoke, from me at least, that emotion of loving gratitude that only one's parents and most intimate teachers can call forth." The following passages show what Carman learnt from Arnold.

"If art and literature are devoted to the service of beauty, no less are they dedicated to the service of truth and goodness. In the phrase which Arnold used to quote, it is their business to make the reason and will of God prevail." (The Purpose of Poetry.)

"It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the question, How to live. . . . A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; a poetry of indifference to moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life*."

(Matt. Arnold cited by Carman in his essay on Longfellow.)

See also, however, Appendix "Emerson and Carman"

2 To cite only one instance:

"I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,

one has something of a foreshadowing of Carman's unitrinianism:

"For all the bonds shall be broken and rent in sunder
And the soul of man go free
Forth with these three (Science, Art, Religion)
Into the lands of wonder."

How much Hovey owed to Carman and how much Carman to Hovey it is impossible to say. That the collaboration of the two poets fostered their common qualities is beyond question.

When one comes to appreciate the voluminous work of Carman as a whole, one is struck by its brilliant merits and its serious defects. There is, to deal with the latter first, excess almost everywhere. The poet is too often carried away by enthusiasm for his creed, and on such occasions—if we may quote without discourtesy from his own criticism of Swinburne —"from a single poetic thought, he will brew a barrel of verbiage." Happily, he seems to have realized of late "that reiteration is almost always a sign of weakness." As it stands, also, the work is not sufficiently varied in tone. The more sombre emotions of the early books are drowned in the pæan of joy that rings somewhat monotonously through the later volumes. One is apt to lose sight of the poet's humanity and, in so doing, ceases to feel the full force of his charm. To these more or less general defects must be added some that are, as it were, merely local. Many of the poems of "Behind the Arras" and a few of the lyrics of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" are decidedly obscure, although the latter are certainly much less so

For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her top sails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea."

(The Sea Gipsy.)

than is supposed by many who fail to perceive their "sensational" nature.[1] Much of the work contained in the volumes, "From the Green Book of the Bards" and "From the Book of Myths," is facile in execution and, for didactic verse, attenuated in thought. Instead of giving a complete statement of his philosophy, Carman tricks out its separate principles in poetic metaphors, forgetful of the fact these principles in themselves are often neither original nor even particularly interesting. Had the poet expressed his thought more comprehensively in these books, there would have been fewer accusations of his having imitated Emerson and Browning.

Freed like some precious gem from its grosser elements, the work of Carman reveals its true worth. It may perhaps be greatly reduced in volume, but what remains is still considerable and of sterling merit. Its variety is almost astounding. Carman is before everything else a nature poet and, as we have shown, a profound naturalism permeates all his work, but he is not a nature poet alone. His title to consideration does not lie solely in his having written such poems as "The Eavesdropper" and "Afoot;" it lies also in his having given birth to such powerful pieces of grim emotion as "In the Wings," such charming fantasies as "The Dustman," such weird Northern ballads as "The Yule Guest," such exquisite light verse as "The Paper Moon," such passionate love songs as "I loved you when the tide of prayer," such rollicking, happy-go-lucky snatches as "In the House of Idiedaily," such finely chiselled gems as Nos. xviii and xxiii. of the "Sappho," and such impressive philosophical poems as "On Ponus Ridge." Carman's genius has its limits—it rarely, and scarcely ever with success, displays itself in themes dealing with the social life of man[2]—but within it own compass

[1] That is, how their inspiration is largely drawn from sense suggestions.

[2] Unlike Browning, Carman somewhat turns aside *in his poetry* from the ugly facts of life; he does not, so to speak, go down among the crowd of erring, suffering humanity. His world is always the bright and innocent world of Nature. Perhaps his artistic theories are in part responsible for this but, in any case, his didacticism would be vastly more effective if at

its strength and versatility are undeniable. The imagination of the poet, which would seem extremely sensitive to the influence of his environment[1] is wide-reaching and full of colour; his fancy is fine and delicate; his diction is cultured and "magical;" and he possesses a gift of melodious versification such as perhaps no other transatlantic writer, with the exception of Poe, has as yet exhibited. Canadian in his youthful gaiety and love of adventure, New England in his practical idealism and freedom from dogma, and more Latin than anything else in his passionate love of the beautiful, Bliss Carman is not only a singer of whom the Dominion has every reason to be proud but one of the most original and captivating poets of the present century. To describe the impression produced by his verse we can find no more appropriate words than those he himself uses in speaking of a rainbird's song. "It is a strain which pierces to the heart and plays upon the soul. The world is renewed for us. We pass backward a thousand years to the morning of the earth, before care and sorrows were begotten, before ever we bethought ourselves of retrospect or inquiry."

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times he showed us his philosophy battling triumphantly amid the gloom and horror of city life.

1 Such sensitiveness is, as we pointed out, one of the chief characteristics of the early poems. The tendency of the poet, however, to draw his inspiration from his philosophy rather than directly from Nature, renders it less easy to distinguish in the later work. The difference in atmosphere, notwithstanding, between the Nova Scotian poems of "Lost Haven" and the New England productions of, say, "The Rough Rider" is obvious to a degree. Possibly much of variety of Carman's work is due to the sensitiveness of his imagination to what may be roughly termed, local colour.

APPENDIX I.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BLISS CARMAN'S WORKS.

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The Green Book of the Bards. (100 copies.) Wrappers, Sm. 4to. Cambridge, 1898.

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The Princess of the Tower, etc. (62 copies.) Boards, Cr. 8vo. New York, 1906.

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The Gate of Peace. (New edition with a Prologue and an Epilogue.) Wrappers, 8vo. New Canaan, Conn., April, 1909.

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APPENDIX II.

EXTRACT FROM AN APOSTLE OF PERSONAL HARMONIZING.

AN APPRECIATION

by

BLISS CARMAN

of the work

OF MARY PERRY KING.

There have been ages when the soul of the world was bent on winning happiness through the senses, when the satisfactions of the mind and the spirit were counted as nothing. There have been ages when men were concerned with the affairs of the spirit alone, when religious ecstacy was accounted all in all, when art and sciences and material comforts were ignored, and the ascetic cared only for his impossible dream. Lastly there have been ages devoted overmuch to science, ages of skepticism, barren alike of religious ardor and refining art. All these have been partial and inadequate racial experiences. They must give place to the next great step forward in human progress, the idea of a symmetrical perfection, the realization that perfection can never be reached through renouncing or violating any one of the three essential factors in man's triune nature, but only through duly recognizing them as equal and bestowing upon them equal reverence, care, and education.

This triunistic idea is as fundamental as the idea of evolution; and it bears the same relation to education that evolution does to science. While the need of physical training is generally

recognized, there is almost no realization of its coherent influence upon character building and social evolution, of its value as a fine art, and of its potentiality as a part of every liberal education. Even physical educators themselves seem seldom to have been aware of the tremendous influence they might have wielded. Their systems for the most part look no further than muscle-making; and we are still confronted with the absurd anomaly of American girls and women trained in the wooden maneuvers of German or Swedish military drill. It is only our wiser teachers, like Dr. D. A. Sargent and Mary Perry King, who have seen the wrong of such methods, and have modified foreign systems to native needs and growing ideals. In such ready soil the triunistic ideal of general education, and the realization of physical education as an art, are bearing fruit.

To quote again from Maurice Hewlett, "It is no harder for a woman to make herself a work of supreme art than for a man to paint a masterpiece or to write a classic. But she must cultivate and use her genius for self-expression. What material to work with—fine moving, breathing, speaking medium, infinitely more elastic than painter's stuff, infinitely more potent than aught inanimate, this being, warm, tinged with life, instinct with meaning, rhythmic, eloquent! You can be picture, form, poem, symphony, in one. You address the mind through every sense. Every gesture is charged, every throb can express, every word be a phrase, every look a tone, and every tone a revelation."

That is the ideal. "Ah, but how?" you may ask. What teaching can accomplish this? Personal harmonizing educates just such individual genius. It took an interested and plastic but perfectly untrained student, and in six months placed her in the front ranks of interpretative dancers in the most critical drawing rooms and studios of New York, in original dances created for her by her teacher; and a little later secured her a place in the New Theater Company. But personal harmonizing does not find its fullest scope in training dancers; that is only an instance of its special possibilities. It takes numbers of rank

and file public school children, and in six months, at two lessons a week, gives them command of fine personal carriage, habitual unity of thought, feeling, and expression, through co-ordinating their motion and speech. It is showing teachers how to get prompt and perceptible improvement in the personalities of their students. And because it enlists and cares for all the powers, it gives its pupils a happy and mellow culture such as no other education has been able to secure. A method of education which not only helps men and women to go through their daily tasks with greater ease and efficiency, but enables them to put heart in all their work, to realize their own genius, and to find gladness at every turn, is what we have been looking for.

The aim of Mrs. King's work may be said in a word to be the educating of individual genius; to give people freedom of spirit by placing at their disposal a healthy body freed and attuned to the finest uses of thought and feeling. That method of education is surely best which takes cognizance of the entire personality and attempts to fit it for predestined uses. To learn to walk and move well, to breathe and speak efficiently—these are rudiments of education that have been strangely neglected. To reinstate them in their place and to relate them to symmetrical general culture, is our need. The body cannot thrive on futile and disordered exertion, nor the spirit be refreshed by silly and pointless exercise. And because the failure of the old order of physical education is being very generally felt, this new vitalizing ideal of triune culture of which I am speaking is spreading through the country like a message of reprieve.

If I understand Mrs. King's philosophy rightly, she would say that unity, order of motion, and poise, are three main considerations in her scheme of training. To preserve and foster one's unity of being; not to be distracted nor to suffer a partial culture; not to develop the head at the expense of the heart, nor the hand at the cost of either. To be a single, united being in all our aspirations, thoughts, and actions; to be glad all over, to be intelligent all over, to be efficient through and through. This

is to realize one's entire being as a unit. "Isolation of parts" is a phrase significant of much that was wrong in old-fashioned physical teaching, indeed in old-fashioned education generally. To stand immovable on one leg while performing gyrations with the other, or to swing Indian clubs while the whole body, except the arms, was held rigid, might be excellent training for St. Vitus's dance, Mrs. King would say, but was ridiculous preparation for the art of daily living.

By order of motion, or sequence of procedure, is meant this: that there must be what Mrs. King calls spiritual lead in all ideal effort, in all our movements, undertakings, and actions. It is the order of nature; first, energy, wish, caring, choice; then thought, aim, direction; and lastly, realization in accomplishment. To follow this order is to secure the utmost natural economy of effort, efficiency of result, and pleasure in occupation; that is to say, the utmost beauty, helpfulness, and happiness in every personal act and in all human endeavor.

Having realized unity in ourselves, to give it habitual poise is our further task. Poise of personality involves poise of the person, an unwabbling command of our bodies; and this in turn can only be maintained through muscular ability and a firm base of support. That implies unrestricting clothing and footgear—for women particularly some form of dress that shall not obstruct deep breathing nor mar the soft, free grace of the throat and neck, and broad-toed, heelless shoes that shall give an adequate footing and freedom for the moving body. It is an ideal that does not sound promising to the average woman, and certainly most dress reforms have not been altogether happy. But Mrs. King, who has given a great deal of thought to this branch of her subject, seems to have solved the mysterious difficulty in some fortunate way without sacrificing anything of the grace and exquisiteness which rightly enough belong to women. I suppose it is her inherent Latin taste which enables her to be radical without being obtrusive, and essential without being eccentric. She certainly carries out her uncompromising ideals with great

tact and graciousness. In her philosophy of life the most needed reforms for modern woman could hardly be called a gain, unless they could be secured without impairing her immemorial dignity and charm. Like many thoughtful people, she sees that American women are in some danger of selling their birthright for a mess of pottage; and while her ardent life is given to forwarding their essential interests and upholding for them unfaltering ideals, many of the more conspicuous "women's movements" find her indifferent. She is too deep a thinker—I should like to say too full of profound racial wisdom—to be carried away by popular clamor.

This is not the least of my reasons, when I try to speak critically of her teaching, for giving her a place among modern thinkers beside the wise and serene Maeterlinck.

* Mrs. King holds her classes in New York during the winter, and at "Moonshine," her house in the Catskills, during the summer. She collaborated with Carman in "The Making of Personality."

APPENDIX III.

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT MOONSHINE, TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE SCHOOL OF PERSONAL HARMONIZING.

. . . . A stranger might see here only a company of intelligent students come together for the practice of new achievements and to listen to the discourse of an accomplished woman. But to me it is like Plato's academe, this atmosphere to which we have been admitted. I see that the Modern Spirit, which dissects all doctrines and holds fast only that which can prove itself true and desirable and comely,—which is forever questing, forever accomplishing, forever growing,—has here enunciated its latest revelation. Rosseau's plan for freedom, Pestalozzi's impassioned love for his fellow beings, Froebel's sagacious comprehension of nature's laws, Delsarte's profound and clarifying discovery, here begin to find their complete fulfilment and utility. And the founder of your school, like her great predecessors in the science and art of education, has only come to this precious victory for her ideals after years of unremitting effort and discouragement, such as only those who are possessed by a sublime ideal can sustain. . . .

. . . . Your teaching calls for a scrupulous adherence to the finest code of ethics. Unitrinianism has truly its religious note, as well as its philosophical and artistic. It appeals to the moral or emotional side of human nature, quite as much as to the intellectual and physical, for its sanction. The spiritual life comes quite as much within its province as the other two. It conceives all three to be of equal importance, and their co-equal culture to be imperative for the education of the individual. And it concedes and inculcates the supremacy of the spirit in all things, in conduct, in growth, in art. It perceives that there

can be no successful issue in the world of knowledge and speculation, nor in the world of art and affairs, without the radiant leadership of the soul; and that any philosophy, any civilization, which is careless of spiritual things, is doomed to frustration and failure. And the great proof of its validity is this, that it comes to us from nature, and is not a closed system contrived by a single mind. It is a happy discovery, not a clever invention. With its burden of spirituality, its passion for truth, its unashamed love of all lovely things, it is not come to destroy old systems, but to fulfil them. It would not subvert religion; its only hope is to strengthen man's heart. It would not conflict with science and philosophy; it would only make them more inspired and more human. It would not discount any of the arts of life; it would only lend them new meaning and vitality. And because it is not arbitrary nor finite, but plastic and natural, it is applicable to the needs of every personality. It does not furnish patterns, it only upholds standards, so that, while it demands of us the utmost culture, it permits the utmost variety of character. It does not ask us to conform to any type,—neither in our creeds, our convictions, nor our pursuits. It only asks us to be our best selves, to realize our finest ideals, to make the utmost use of all our powers. We cannot be good unitrinians, unless we learn to be glad-hearted; for joyousness is the native air of the soul. We cannot be true unitrinians, unless we learn to cultivate an eager and appreciative intelligence; for knowledge is the food of the mind. We cannot be comely unitrinians at all, unless we develop our bodies in the freedom and health and grace which they are so capable of enjoying and utilizing; for happy achievement is the end of life; as happy love is its beginning, and happy learning its means of growth.

And this brings us more specifically to consider the tasks which are to be yours. Your particular field of teaching is the training of the growing body into harmony with the growing mind and spirit. This is the medium through which you are to influence personality and mould character. You are to reach the inmost recesses of moral being, where the emotions and will

reside—to arouse, to encourage, to strengthen human nature at its very source, and by offering it beautiful things to think about, to do, and say, educe from it beneficent habits of gracious and graceful activity; and by freeing the natural avenues of expression, motion, and speech, you will stimulate the mind to clarify and express whatever thought and reflection life may have engendered there.

In this, your making of personality, you will use chiefly the three great rhythmic arts of music, poetry and dancing. Through the rhythmic spell of music, the most primitive, potent, and universally appreciated of all the fine arts, you will lay a charm upon the willing spirit and awaken the most primal and most puissant instincts of capability. Through the rhythmic spell of poetry you will bring to the willing intelligence all "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (to repeat Matthew Arnold's happy phrase) because in no other way can sublimated truth be conveyed. The poetry of the world contains the wisdom of the world; it is only in forms of poetry that wisdom receives its most perfect statement, and becomes food not only for the brooding mind, but for the deeper subconscious intuition as well. The full value of poetry does not lie in the charming magic of its cadences, nor in the unequivocal truth it embodies, nor even in its enraptured and orphic mode of speech, but in the fact that it blends all these characteristics together as the only language adequate to serve the threefold requirements of man's nature. All the sublime consolations of religion have come to us out of the ancient heart of the eternal in forms of poetry; and into forms of poetry must all the news of science and philosphy be transmuted again to serve the fullest purposes of life. And since poetry is a spoken art and depends for its ultimate beauty on the musical tones of the voice, your harmonizing training will not overlook the importance of good speech in your ideal curriculum. Finally, through the rhythmic spell of the dance and interpretive motion, you will free and strengthen, you will co-ordinate and harmonize, you will beautify and make symmetrical the bodies and their conduct committed

to your charge. In the ardor of your noble calling so impersonal and universal in its aims, you will spread the lyric cry,

"No glory is too splendid
To house this soul of mine,
No tenement too lowly
To serve it for a shrine."

In all these arts which are to be properly yours, you see, you will be dealing with the greater things. In the effort to forward the development of symmetrical human personalities, the first great requisite is freedom—freedom for the human body, as well as for the spirit and mind, for the salvation of the whole being in sanity and joy. For this cause you must forever discard, abandon, discredit and utterly condemn all artificial restrictions which hinder personal freedom and mar personal perfection, whether they be creeds or corsets, shibboleths or shoes, collars or conventions. Mind and spirit and muscle grow by use—grow ill by illuse, and grow well by good use—but not by disuse. Our creeds and our shoes must be our own, fitted to our own measure, suited to our own needs, large enough to allow free play, strong enough to withstand the roughness of the journey, but not cramped after grotesque prescribed inhuman pattern nor accepted at any extraneous bidding. Yet for my soul's good, I would rather say my prayers to a painted idol than wear a pinching shoe. Sanguinary wars have been waged, nations have been disrupted, men have perished at the stake for a good called freedom of conscience. Your fight will be for freedom of the body—not only freedom to breathe and move, but freedom to obey the behests of its own soul before all others. It is conceded well to have a sentitive conscience and a ready understanding. To possess all the faculties of an uninjured, cultivated and inspired physique is a no less vital good, no less to be desired. . . .

You will often be discouraged in your task; for with all the mystic wisdom of which humanity is capable—the insight, the self-sacrifice, the nobility—there are still abysms of unreason

from which at times it seems averse to stir. Yet do not argue overmuch. Sow the seed, and experience will plow it in. Sun it with fair example and time will bring it to fruitage. Do all you can and let God do the rest. He has ways unknown to rhetoric of bringing the soul to reason. And the secret of art's success is, that it passes the guards of prejudice unchallenged and occupies the very citadel of the soul before we are aware. . . . . ''

(1911).

APPENDIX IV.

EMERSON AND CARMAN.

We give some instances in Carman's work, prose and verse, of obviously Emersonian conceptions:

(a) "The fine arts are an outgrowth and finer development of the industrial arts. . . Before we can reinstate them in that position of honour which they have always held, hitherto, among civilized nations, we shall have to find some solution for our industrial difficulties."

(The Purpose of Poetry).

"Beauty must come back to the useful arts, and the distinction between the fine and the useful arts be forgotton . . ."

(Emerson Art).

[The same idea is found also in Ruskin.]

(b) "Art, if you care to say so, is all made up of metaphors—is itself the universal metaphor of the soul."

(The Kinship of Nature).

"Art, universally, is the spirit creative. . . The universal soul is the alone creator of the useful and the beautiful."

(Emerson—Art).

(c) "O artist, know that unless you can afford to be poor . . . you can never be merged into the greater sweep of being whence inspiration flows."

(The Kinship of Nature).

"That Spirit (which inspires the artist) . . . comes forth to the poor and hungry and such as are of simple tastes."

(Emerson—The Poet).

(d) We are the pensioners of Spring."

(The Pensioners).

"When I watch that flowing river, which out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, I see that I am a pensioner; not a cause, but a surprised spectator of that ethereal water."

(Emerson—"Oversoul.")

(e) "We must remember that Nature has probably endowed all her children with a superabundance of egotism."

(The Kinship of Nature.)

"Nature sends no creature, no man into the world, without adding a small excess of his proper quality."

(Emerson—"Nature.")

(f) "Only heed the lyric moment!"

(A Vision of Sappho.)

"It's (Life's) chief good is for well mixed people who can enjoy what they find without question. . . Since our office is with moments let us husband them. Let us be poised and wise and our own to-day."

(Emerson—"Experience.")

(g) "Ah, trust the soul, my friends, to seek her own great ends. . ."

(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

"The soul may be trusted to the end."

(Emerson—Love.)

(h) "There is no period between the soul and God."

(The Word at St. Kavin's.)

"Into every intelligence there is a door which never closes through which the Creator passes."

(Emerson—Experience.)

(i) When alone . . . we are most in accord with the spirit of the universe."

(The Kinship of Nature.)

"But if he would know what the great God speaketh, he must 'go into his closet and shut the door,' as Jesus said. . .

He must greatly listen to himself, withdrawing himself from all the accents of other men's devotion."

(Emerson—Oversoul.)

APPENDIX V.

ENGLISH REVIEWERS AND BLISS CARMAN.

When we turned—which we did not do until after the greater part of the book was written—to the various articles and notices on Carman's work, we were aggreably suprised to find that, on the whole, our opinions were supported by a fairly solid phalanx of English reviewers. The supremacy of the poet over all his Canadian rivals was unquestioned. The Athenæum in reviewing "A Treasury of Canadian Verse" (Aug. 11, 1900) hailed Carman as 'the one authentic poet who stands head and shoulders above the crowd; The Academy in an article entitled "The Canadian Muse" (June 30, 1904) was equally emphatic; Mr. Bernard Muddiman writing in T.P.'s Weekly on "Some English Canadian Poets" (April 16, 1909), declared that of all Carman was "the most original and song-gifted." In a review of "The Poetry of America," The Times, whilst severely criticizing the poet's "lamentable extravagances, weaknesses, and lapses from true taste," remarked that it was in him that one must look for indications of the American poetry of the future.

Nor was the chorus of praise that greeted the appearance of "Low Tide on Grand Pré" less unanimous. We give a few extracts from two of the chief English reviews.

"The whole book is an expression of passionate delight in the beauty of the outside world, in the joy of life, the joy and wonder of earth. It is intensely human because it deals with certain vague ardours, vivid longings after the indefinite in nature, which are among the fancies which humanity at large cherishes most keenly. Mr. Carman has learnt the true vagabond's secret, and he can render it in verse: a singularly rare

combination, for by far the greater part of those who feel the one have neither power nor desire to achieve the other. . . . Mr. Carman is, in general, subtle in the expresion of fine shades though his phraseology—rich, coloured, suggestive at its best, and with an elusive touch in it of natural magic—does sometimes become a mere coloured mist. He can express fine shades, but it is doubtful if he can express anything else. . .''

(Athenæum. April 14th, 1894.)

"It is difficult to distinguish the charm which haunts these Acadian lyrics. There is in them a delicate air that reaches us

"Through twilight scented fine like musk";

a serene calm, as that of

"A lone rush
Astir in the slim
White stream where sheer
Blue mornings are";

a sense of melancholy and regret, ever wrought by and instinct with Nature. . . Most of the lyrics themselves suggest that moth in "Pulvis and Umbra" with pale gray dust of beaten wings," each a

"Vagrant of the starlit gloom,
One frail waif of beauty fronting
Immortality and doom";

in all of them, something of

"Dust and shadow and forgetting
Frost and reverie and sleep."

All are dominated by an overmastering sense of beauty, and permeated with a love of nature for which there is no epithet so apt as the much misused and hackneyed word "intense." If ever there was a child of Nature, it is the author of "The End of the Trail. . ."

(W. Sharp in the Academy. Jan. 6, 1894).

It will be noticed that these review articles—both characteristic pieces of criticism, and the second an admirable rendering of the atmosphere of the volume—are silent as regards the themes of the lyrics. Indeed, the writer of the first quoted would seem to suggest the confession made later by Mr. William Archer: "this Book of Lyrics" is genuinely lyrical in intention and in tone; but one respectful and indeed admiring reader must confess his inability, in most cases, to make out what the lyrics are about."

Scarcely less stinted was the approval that was lavished on "Behind the Arras."[1] Sir (then Mr.) A. T. Quiller-Couch wrote eloquently in The Spectator of "the glimpses of undying roses" revealed by the poet, and the critic of The Athenæum whilst noting that "the style is rougher, more uncertain, more tumultuous," observed that the book marked "an intellectual advance, an advance in perception." (March 27, 1897). In none of these reviews, however, is the *thought* of the poems dealt with—a strange omission in view of the fact that both the title piece and "Beyond the Gamut" are essentially philosophical poems. The Athenæum writer, it is true, remarks that the poet "sets himself (perhaps not very seriously) to wrestle with problems and especially with that insoluble problem of death," but he leaves the "how and why" entirely to the reader's imagination. With the words in parenthesis, it is needless to add, we do not agree at all. Once again, one must turn to Mr. Archer for the necessary information that the poems are obscure; "To read it (the volume) is, to me, a sort of Tantalus agony; I feel 'How I should enjoy this, if only I knew what it was about." We are personally grateful to Mr. Archer for his courageous avowal; had it not been for it, we should have been too discouraged after our reading of Carman's early poems to have proceeded with the

[1] We have omitted the criticisms on the "Songs from Vagabondia" as the substance of these is given in the notice on the "Ballads and Lyrics," p. 239.

present study. It was only after we had read the poet's later work that we found light breaking in upon the obscurity. Even now such a poem as "The Moondial" possesses no lucid meaning for us.

Mr. Archer's notice was the only one we were able to find on "The Ballads of Lost Haven." We agree entirely with his remarks, but would point out that he seems to have missed the semi-symbolical nature of some of the poems": An impressive book. . . (It) is full of the grim superstitions of a stormy coast, and he (the poet) dwells, almost to the point of monotony, upon the maligner aspect of the great waters. But some of his poems have an eerie strength, and others a haunting charm peculiar to themselves."

The notice of The Athenæum on Carman's "Ballads and Lyrics," an anthology of the poet's earlier work, contained some very interesting remarks: "With the difference which the possession of the definite literary temperament implies, he (Carman) is one of the first sons of Walt Whitman." Such a statement may read in two ways. If the writer mean that Carman possesses the vagabondish nature of Whitman, the inherent need for freedom which, as Parkman remarks somewhere, is born of the free life of nature, we accept his opinion. If, on the other hand, he would imply that Carman's thought has been influenced greatly by that of the American poet, we diagree with him entirely. The case is one of similarity in temperament, that is all. About the accuracy of the observations with which the notice concludes, there can be no doubt whatever:—"Bliss Carman is a man of letters grafted on a vagrant. Art also is to him a kind of adventure. In a beautiful elegy on Stevenson, he describes him as "the master of the roving kind. . . and hails all artists as "You whom the haunted vision drives

Incredulous of home and ease
Perfection's lovers all your lives."

Not an impeccable or finished artist but a genuine one. By

methods of his own, direct, slangy, regardless of the conventions of language, and often of the decencies of rhyme (the criticism is lightly overdone; it applies to the poems drawn from the "Songs from Vagabondia," but not to those taken from "Low Tide") he succeeds in making his impression. . ." There is another observation in the article which we would strongly underline:—"He is no blatant and incurable optimist. He sees life in no monotonous bath of sunshine, but as it is, with its shifting and varied light and shadows." (Athenæum. July 19, 1902).

A very different class of review was that of the Academy. This article, which bore the title of "A Plain Man's Poet," informed its readers that "Mr. Carman is by no means great, but has charm and genuine feeling." Beyond remarking that the "*plain* man" who can find entertainment in such a book as "Behind the Arras" has yet to be found, we shall leave the notice severely alone.

When one came to examine the reviews which appeared on the volumes of what we have called Carman's transitional period, a distinct change of tone was noticeable. The Athenæum critic writing on "More Songs from Vagabondia" (Dec. 25, 1897) did not for once mince matters. "Carman," he said, "is writing too much; and he went on to observe that "the note is not sufficiently varied." "Why," he asked pertinently, "has the poet deserted the subject matter of Behind the Arras?" "From the Green Book of the Bards," however, received a good —a better than it deserved—notice from the same review. We would call attention to one observation:—"He (Carman) has the primitive instinct of migration, and the first stirrings of Spring drive him to strike tent and be moving in search of ancient and endless adventure." (Jan. 9, 1904).

The Times was not so complaisant. We give its notice on the "Song from a Northern Garden" at some length.

Bliss Carman continues to imitate Browning ("The Word

at St. Kavin's and "Above the Gaspereau" quoted). Out of his blend (of the elements of evolutionalism and transcendentalism) there is no denying Mr. Carman produces some brave and pulsing verse, with a swift flow of melody and a fine facility in rhyme. But so didactic a poet, a poet who compels one to use all those long words in 'ism, compels one also to examine what he has to say. The result of analysis is the conclusion that Mr. Carman proves his point by false premises. The poet who sent the sluggard to the ant stopped short of claiming for his model a conscious virtue; Mr. Carman makes moral agents of fir trees—his "initiate gospeller firs." . . .

> "Behold the fir trees how unswerved they are!
> Native to sun and storm
> They cringe not nor conform,
> Save to the gentle law their sound heart knows."

Is this argument or misused illustration? When Mr. Carman writes of his garden-flowers:

> "When the dark pansies nod to say
> Good morning to the marigolds. . ."

We welcome a pretty piece of fancy. When we find him moralizing his fir-trees and—stranger still in a poem which has evolution for its very backbone—talking of

> "The large primeval wood,
> Leisure, and amplitude,"

and of the "primal ecstacy and poise" we can only regret that his ideas are indigested, and that he suffers from an uncritical facility, which lets him hurry on without reflecting whether his collected reasons for his faith are disentangled, and whether such lines as these are any thing but doggerel

> "All selfish gain at best
> Brings but profound unrest
> And inward loss, despite our loud professions,

Think therefore what it is,
What surety of bliss
To be absolved from burdensome possessions!"
(Literary Supplement. July 15, 1905).

Although, doubtless, such a piece of criticism as this is none too pleasant reading for its unfortunate victim, we cannot help being enthusiastic in its praise. It is clear, definite, and sincere. The writer may err in his judgments, but he does not trick out a lack of perception in fine sounding but meaningless phrases. He gives his opinions fearlessly, and, what is more important, endeavours to substantiate them. Such criticism does not leave things as they were. One is forced—and therein lies its great utility—either to accept it or to refute it. Let us examine the chief points of the article. "Bliss Carman," the writer says, "continues to imitate Browning," the reference is clearly to the technique of the poems quoted, we agree. He proceeds to define the philosophy of the poet as a "blend of the *elements* of evolutionalism and transcendentalism." We accept his definition as far as it goes. There is a basis of transcendentalism in Carman's system, although, as we have shown, it is not derived from Emerson, but from personal experience in the world of Nature. There are also, as the writer remarks, the elements of evolutionalism, but these elements (derived perhaps from Browning) are grafted on the poet's philosophy more because they seem to justify its ideal of conduct than because of their intrinsic value. It is the *manner* in which the process of development takes place which interests Carman. As will be seen by turning back to our chapter on the evolution of the poet's thought, the verses cited by the critic have a very definite meaning. One is tempted at first sight to agree with the observation that Carman goes too far in ascribing to his fir trees "a conscious virtue." Still, it must be remembered that in so doing he is only unconsciously adopting the manner of American Indian tradition. We cite in support of our statement a few lines taken from the Mohawk myth, "The Man Mostly

Face with the Luminous Eyes" (the translation is by a Mohawk Indian):—"He formed his ideas of things from Nature. He saw how the tall trees stood, self-sufficing, in the woods; how between their roots the grasses stood, their attendants. The withering of these grasses he knew heralded the withering of the tree. The high trees he respected most. They bent each to each when the winds went past, each acknowledging the other, but swept back again, easily, erect. Different, he noticed it was, with the small bushes. They were intertwined; the wind blew and they rattled and rustled and strove together, irrevocably interlaced; rustled and rattled so that the leaves were showered from each in the petty, striving contact. No—he loved best the tall trees that bent each to each and then returned, erect, self-sufficing."

With the notice of The Times on "The Pipes of Pan" (June 19, 1903), we found ourselves in still more perfect agreement. (The book, it will be remembered, marked the beginning of Carman's classical period). We regret, however, that the writer confined himself too strictly to destructive criticism and did not, like the critic of the Academy, give the poet the credit due to him for having written the exquisite lyric "Daphne" and the one or two others which stand out in brilliant relief against the general mediocrity of the volume. His observations, as far as they go, seem to us fairly accurate:—"Greek mythology viewed through the Brownings, with a touch here and there of Stevenson; and the mythology becomes so didactic at times that it reads like a preacher's parable. There is a tendency to repetition of truths which he himself (to say nothing of Browning) has revealed to us once before. . . . to extravagances such as "Chir and gurgle . . . ." [We have ourselves quoted the passage.] "Syrinx" reads like poetical variations on "Music hath Charms." . . . At best reminiscences of "Abt Vogler" [we missed the point]:—

"And there soars the shining structure, tone on tone as star on star,

Spheres of knowledge and of beauty, where love's compensations are,
And the plenitudes of spirit move to rhythm without a jar. . .''

Nothing which can add to the poet's fame.'' We do not think that the poet views '' Greek mythology through the Brownings '' —the writer has missed altogether Carman's triunistic conceptions; nor do we find any *influence* of Stevenson—the poet possesses something of the Stevenson temperament, but that is another matter; with these reservations, we accept the opinions expressed in the article.

On turning to the review articles on ''The Songs of the Sea Children,'' we discovered that the voice of English criticism was no longer in harmony with our own. The book, which we had found good and in places excellent, was almost unanimously condemned. The Athenæum (July 30, 1904) remarked that the first two lyrics were promising but that the bulk was disappointing. One lyric alone (No. 106) was singled out for praise. The notice concluded with the following passage: '' The relation of the mass of these poems, frankly human, personal, amatory, with the vague and apparently pantheistic framework in which they are set, seems to us forced and even meaningless.'' The Times observed that '' physical passion in various degrees of intensity, and nature read in terms of physical passion, soon pall as subjects '' (July 24, 1904). The Academy informed its public that the volume did not show Carman at his best.

Against such an unanimous verdict, it may seem presumptuous to protest. We would, however, point out that in two out of the three notices the writers do not seem to have understood the conception of the poet. This, we are well aware, does not explain the failure of the critics to have seen beauty in the lyrics we quoted when dealing with the volume, but it may have been the cause of their whole hearted condemnation. We can only refer the matter to the taste of the reader.

The Athenæum notice on the '' Sappho '' (January 5, 1907) was, if less enthusiastic than we expected, more in accordance

with our opinion. The work it remarked, "purports to be a restoration of the poems of Sappho from her extant fragments; but except in Nos. v. and vi., which are translations of the two surviving odes, the proportion of Sappho in them is small and that of Mr. Carman large . . . they are pleasing to read . . . but far from reproducing the passion, which, whatever may have been her other qualities, an essential characteristic of Sappho. . . . To call the roar of the sea "a sigh from the fitful great heart of the world" does not sound Hellenic. Sappho would not have signed "My lover smiled . . ." Two of the best pieces xxiii. and liv.

"The Rough Rider" and "A Painter's Holiday" have not been published in England. The latter was privately printed.

On one essential point, it will have been noticed, the opinions expressed in this book coincide almost exactly with those of English literary criticism: Carman began his artistic career brilliantly but deteriorated as he progressed towards middle age. We are convinced that he is now justifying once more, although in a different *genre*, his title to poetic greatness; but nevertheless there seems to us little doubt that for a long time he failed to fulfil the promise of his early performance. This failure we have ascribed to a variety of causes, the chief among which are the poet's desire to instruct as well as to charm and his consequent adoption of a theory of art that denies him free expression of his emotions. The fundamental cause is the first mentioned. It must be borne in mind, however, that inspiration never entirely deserted the poet. Hidden among the profuse weeds of his worst seasons are rare flowers which only require gathering to form a collection of incomparable charm.

On the question also of Carman's greatness as a poet of nature, we are in complete harmony with the verdict pronounced by the leading English reviews. We doubt, however, if their critics fully realized what a profound influence "The Great Mother" exerted upon his early work. The praise so lavishly

bestowed upon "Low Tide on Grand Pré" would, we think, have been greater still had the reviewers been able to understand more thoroughly the poet's inspiration.

APPENDIX VI.

FRENCH CANADIAN POETS.

Octave Crémazie: born at Quebec, April 16, 1827; educated at the seminary of the town; partner with his two brothers in a bookseller's business; centre of a literary circle. After his failure in business, for which he had not the least aptitude, Crémazie left Quebec for France, where he died in poverty, 16th January, 1879. His works were first published in full at Montreal, in 1882.
"Œuvres Complètes." (Montreal, 1904.)

Louis-Honoré Fréchette: born at Lévis, November 16, 1839; educated at the seminary of Quebec and afterwards at Nicolet; called to the bar in 1864; journalist and advocate; man of letters; LL.D. of three universities, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George; died 31st May, 1908. "Mes Loisirs" (Quebec, 1863); "La Voix d'un Exilé" (Quebec, 1869); "Pêle-Mêle" (Montreal, 1877); "Fleurs Boréales" and "Oiseaux de Neige" (Montreal, 1879); "La Légende d'un Peuple" (Paris, 1887, and Montreal, 1908); "Les Oubliés" and "Voix d'Outre Mer" (Montreal, 1886); "Feuilles Volantes" (Montreal, 1890); "Poésies Choisies" (Montreal, 1908).
Fréchette is also the author of several plays.

Pamphile Le May: born at Lotbinière, January 5, 1837; educated at the seminary of Quebec and at the University of Ottawa; called to the bar at Quebec 1865; librarian of the Assemblée Législative of Quebec; L.D. of Laval University. "Essais Poetiques" (1865); "Evangéline," a translation of Longfellow's poem (1870); "Les Ven-

geances" (1875); "Le Pèlerin de Ste-Anne" (1877), novel; "Picounoc le Maudit" (1878), novel; "Fables Canadiennes" (1881); "Petits Poèmes" (1883); "Contes Vrais" (1904); "Les Gouttelelles" (1904).

William Chapman: Les Québequoises (Quebec, 1876); "Les Feuilles d'Erable" (Montreal, 1890); "Les Aspirations" (Paris, 1904). The last volume was "couronné" by the French Academy.

Alfred Garneau: a son of the famous French Canadian historian. "Poesies" (Montreal, 1906); published posthumously.

Nérée Beauchemin: born at Yamachiche, February 20, 1851; doctor of medicine 1874. "Floraisons Matutinales" (Trois-Rivières, 1897).

Emile Nelligan: born at Montreal of an Irish father and a French Canadian mother; educated at the College of Montreal and later at the College of Jesuits; member of the Ecole Littéraire de Montréal; became of an unsound mind at the age of 20. "Emile Nelligan et Son Œuvre" (Montreal, 1904).

Albert Lozeau: "L'Ame Solitaire" (Montreal and Paris, 1907).

A. Nantel: "Les Fleurs de la Poésie Canadienne" (Montreal, 1904). Very far from justifying its title. Not up to date.

WORKS ON FRENCH CANADIAN LITERATURE.

Charles ab der Halden: "Etudes de Littérature Canadienne Française" (Paris); "Nouvelles Etudes de Littérature Canadienne Française" (Paris).
Easily the best works on the subject.

Camille Roy: "Essais sur la Littérature Canadienne" (Quebec).
The best critical studies by a French Canadian writer.

J. Geddes: "Canadian-French" (Paris, 1902). The work deals with the language and literature of the decade 1890-1900.

There is a good sketch of Canadian French literature in "The New International Encyclopædia" (New York).

APPENDIX VII.

CANADIAN-FRENCH.

Although of late years the attempts to purify the language seem to have met with some degree of success, there can be little doubt that at the time Nelligan was writing it was in a corrupt state. We quote from the "Canadian-French" of J. Geddes.

"J. P. Tardivel's causerie: 'L'anglicisme: violà l'ennemi' (1880) is, as the title may suggest, a good specimen of the numerous philippics of that character that are hurled from time to time against the insidious Anglo-Saxon encroaching invader. The conclusion is that members of parliament, lawyers, business men, workmen, all are given—not to speaking French, but rather English with French words; and from the extracts cited, the claim appears well established. The writer recognizes the thanklessness of the task before him, in as much as he himself is unable to live up always to his own precepts; yet they are on that account none the less worthy of being followed. . . . The first phrases the writer takes verbatim from one of the representatives to the legislature speaking before the house: 'M. l'orateur: j'ai le plancher de la chambre. Je ne puis pas donner un vote silencieux sur la mesure: Je ne puis pas supporter cette mesure; j'objecte à ce qu'on législate en faveur. . . Moi, pour un, je les notifie d'une chose.' Then come the terms 'appointer quelqu'un,' 'décharger quelqu'un'. . . . Terms taken from the people show a still more patent disregard for the genius of the French language, as may be seen by the following expressions, which, as M. Tardivel reiterates, are exceedingly common: 'marchandises sèches' (dry goods); 'cuir à patente' (patent leather); 'office' (office, Fr. bureau); 'huile de Castor' (Castor oil); 'hommes des affaires' (business men); 'du change' (change:

small money); 'des objets patentés (patented articles).'' The list of such expressions might be prolonged almost indefinitely. The marvel is not that Nelligan should have committed such mistakes in language as "vous avez chu" but that he should have committed them so comparatively rarely. The curious line in Clair de Lune Intellectual: "je cours à jamais les *blanches* pretantaines," may perhaps owe its peculiarity to an association of *blanches* with the idea of innocent. Such an association is, of course, common enough in English.

APPENDIX VIII.

ENGLISH CANADIAN POETS.

Charles Sangster: "The St. Laurence and the Saguenay and other Poems" (Kingston and New York, 1856). "Hesperus and other Poems and Lyrics" (Montreal, 1860).

Alexander McLachlan: "Emigrant and other Poems" (Toronto, 1861).

Charles Heavysege: "Saul: a Drama in Three Parts" (Montreal, 1857 and 1859); "Count Filippo: a Drama in Five Acts" (Montreal, 1860); "Jephthah's Daughter" (London and Montreal, 1865).

John Reade: "The Prophecy of Merlin and other Poems" (Montreal ,1870).

William Kirkby: "The U.E.: A Tale of Upper Canada" (Niagara, 1859); "Canadian Idylls" (Toronto, 1878).

Isabella Valancy Crawford: "Old Spookse's Pass and other Poems" (Toronto, 1884).

Charles Mair: "Dreamland and other Poems" (Ottawa, 1868); "Tecumseh: a Drama" (Toronto and London, 1886).

George Frederick Cameron: "Lyrics on Freedom, Love, and Death,"—a posthumous volume edited by the poet's brother, C. T. Cameron (Boston, 1887).

Archibald Lampman: "Among the Millet and other Poems" (Ottawa, 1888); "Lyrics of the Earth" (1895); "Poems," ed. by D. C. Scott (Toronto, 1900).

Charles Gordon Douglas Roberts: "Orion and other Poems" (Philadelphia, 1880); "In Divers Tones" (Montreal,

1887); "Songs of the Common Day" (1893);* "The Book of the Native" (1896);* "New York Nocturnes" (1898);* "Collected Poems" (London, 1903).

* Published in U.S.A.

Wilfred Campbell: "Lake Lyrics and other Poems" (St. John, N.B., 1889); "Beyond the Hills of Dream" (1899); "Collected Poems" (London and New York, 1905).

* Mr. Campbell has also published several poetic dramas.

Duncan Campbell Scott: "The Magic House and other Poems" (Ottawa, 1893); "Labor and the Angel" (Boston, 1898).

ANTHOLOGIES.

"Songs of the Great Dominion." Lighthall. (London, 1889.)

"Canadian Poems." Lighthall. (London, 1891.)

"Younger American Poets." Sladen and Roberts. (London, 1891.)

"Victorian Anthology." Stedman. (Boston, 1895.)

ARTICLES ON ENGLISH CANADIAN POETRY.

Bernard McEvoy: "Canadian Literature" (Author, Dec., 1905). A good sketch of the subject.

Bernard Muddiman: "Some Canadian Poets" (T.P.'s Weekly, April 16, 1909).

The New International Encyclopædia (New York): "Canadian Literature."

The Encyclopædia Britannica: "Canadian Literature." Vastly inferior to the article in the American Encyclopædia.

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